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DUNGEON

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

Dead for a Spell

A D&D® Eberron® adventure for characters of levels 7-9

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Introduction

"Dead for a Spell" is a D&D adventure rooted in the Eberron campaign setting and designed for characters of levels 7–9. Before running this adventure, you should familiarize yourself with the city of Sharn and the Aurum, as presented in the *Eberron Campaign Guide*. This adventure also references people and places introduced in the *Sharn: City of Towers*™ and *Five Nations*™ game supplements, although these products are not required to run the adventure.

In this adventure, the Lord Commander of the Sharn Watch hires the heroes to investigate the murder of an actress. The investigation quickly spirals into a bloody dispute involving a dead wizard's spellbook, political rivalries, and secrets that might foment war among the Five Nations.

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Background

Iyan ir'Talan has a problem. As the Lord Commander of the Watch, it's his job to keep the peace in Sharn. Despite his best efforts, crime is on the rise, and the Watch is rife with corruption. When prominent actress Kelani Thauram is murdered at the Stargazer Theater, Lord Iyan faces his most difficult task.

More than just a sensation in Sharn, Lady Kelani has powerful family connections in Karrnath—connections that could lead to political strife between Karrnath and Breland unless her killers are caught, and quickly. Given the importance of the case, the Dark Lanterns (spies and enforcers loyal to King Boranel of Breland) advise Lord Iyan to seek the aid of outside investigators, fearing that possible corruption will lead to a diplomatic disaster.

Once the adventurers take on the case, they discover that Lady Kelani was also a secret member of the Aurum, a primarily evil organization that influences the politics of the Five Nations for its own benefit. By stealing the lost spellbook of Krystival Valorek, a nefarious Aundairian archwizard, Kelani planned to buy her way into the ranks of the Aurum's Gold Concord. The nature of the spellbook actually makes it far more important than Kelani realizes—potentially giving its possessor the ability to destroy the uneasy peace granted by the Treaty of Thronehold.

The spellbook contains a wealth of magical lore that is valuable in its own right. But more important to those who seek it is the tragic history of the book, which was reclaimed from the ruins of Cyre where Krystival Valorek died on the Day of Mourning. Under orders from the Aundairian crown, Krystival had used powerful scrying rituals in his spellbook to spy on the war effort of Cyre's archmages. Some believe that the lingering magic of those rituals has imbued the spellbook with a record of what caused the Day of Mourning.

Lady Kelani set her sights on the spellbook through an illicit affair with Karrnathi ambassador Syra ir'Tarrn. Although Syra's spymaster, Malen Torr, kept their tryst under wraps, the ambassador was hopelessly ensnared by Kelani's charms. The actress enticed the ambitious Syra into her plots, telling her the truth of her affiliation with the Aurum. She convinced Syra to lend her the spellbook, lying when she said she would return the tome to the embassy once her position in the organization was secure.

With the spellbook no longer in the embassy's vault, Kelani's death puts Ambassador Syra in a terrible predicament. Upon learning of the murder, Syra panics and tasks Spymaster Torr with retrieving the book at all costs, before it is missed.

Before her untimely demise, Kelani had arranged a meeting with Helais ir'Lantar, a member of the Royal Eyes of Aundair, offering to sell the spellbook back to Queen Aurala once Kelani's place in the Gold Concord was established. Before Helais arrived, three warforged enforcers with connections to Sharn's notorious Boromar Clan crime syndicate killed Kelani. She told the warforged where the spellbook lay hidden, but this confession was not enough to save her life.

Although they feign loyalty to the Boromar Clan, the warforged enforcers actually work for another Silver Concordian named Drago Daarn, one of Kelani's rivals in the Aurum. After learning of Kelani's plan through a combination of spying and the actress's tendency to brag about her intentions, Drago decided to make his move against her. He sent three of his warforged thugs to her apartments to search for the book. They didn't find it (though they did steal a golden statuette that Kelani was given as an award), so he ordered them to confront Kelani, find out where the spellbook was hidden, and then kill her. He plans to use the spellbook as Kelani did—selling it back to Aundair and assuming his rightful place in the Aurum's Gold Concord.

Synopsis

What begins as a murder investigation quickly escalates into a struggle between various major players and organizations operating within Sharn. As the investigation into Kelani's death unfolds, the heroes learn of a wizard's spellbook that might contain clues to what happened in Cyre on the Day of Mourning—information that various forces will kill to obtain or conceal.

This adventure is designed as a free-form narrative in which the decisions of the players and the information they uncover shape the flow of events. In general, these events are most likely to unfold as follows.

The Stargazer Incident: Lady Kelani is dead. Tasked with finding her killer, the adventurers arrive at the Stargazer Theater under the supervision of Commander Iyan ir'Talan of the Sharn Watch and the King's Dark Lanterns. Kelani's corpse testifies to the brutality of her murder and hides secrets that become the focus of an extended skill challenge. The investigation is interrupted by the attack of a beholder, sent by Drago Daarn's allies in House Tarkanan to shut down the investigation before it begins.

The unexpected arrival of Helais ir'Lantar of Aundair raises even more questions, but the ambassador is less than forthcoming with answers. He remains out of the picture until Drago Daarn contacts him, offering to deal for the spellbook as Kelani had.

Uninvited Guests: The characters investigate Kelani's residence, encountering Karrnathi agents sent by Spymaster Malen Torr to retrieve the spellbook. Their leader, a vampire named Zanifer Karissa, prefers to kill first and ask questions later. Assuming they survive, the heroes find an extradimensional vault in Kelani's tower where she once hid her valuables, but the spellbook is long gone.

Embassy Showdown: Evidence found in Kelani's residence of a connection between her and Ambassador Syra ir'Tarrn draw the characters to the Karrnath

embassy. If they intimidate or threaten the ambassador, she hides behind her diplomatic immunity. If the encounter turns hostile, Spymaster Torr has the embassy sealed and attempts to dispose of the heroes as neatly as possible.

With some careful roleplaying, the adventurers can entice Syra to share what she knows. Moreover, she arranges for Kelani to be raised from the dead before her father arrives to whisk her body away.

Kelani Speaks: The heroes have a chance to speak with the murder victim in the flesh. Her recent demise convinces Kelani to abandon her plots, but she is eager for revenge. Recognizing one of her killers, she points an accusing finger at the Boromar Clan. She suspects that Saidan Boromar, the crime syndicate's patriarch and a member of the Gold Concord, had her eliminated to halt her rise through the ranks of the Aurum.

Rumble at the Lucky Lady: The characters meet with Saidan Boromar at his tavern, the Lucky Lady. He assures them that the Boromar Clan did not kill Kelani. But what Saidan doesn't know is that some of his warforged enforcers have betrayed him by taking assignments from another member of the Aurum—Drago Daarn. The heroes end up at the center of the fight when they expose the treacherous warforged.

By questioning the warforged, the adventurers learn of Drago Daarn and his plots—and they discover that those plots are reaching their conclusion. Drago has a meeting set with Aundairian ambassador Helais ir'Lantar to negotiate terms of sale for the spellbook.

The Silver Concordian: The adventurers use their newfound connections with the Boromar Clan to discover the location of Drago's meeting with Helais ir'Lantar—an abandoned ruin deep beneath Sharn, used by House Tarkanan assassins as a refuge. Drago has enlisted House Tarkanan to his cause, and the adventurers must fight their way through a gauntlet of trained killers and aberrant monsters before their showdown with the Silver Concordian.

The Spellbook: The final battle with Drago allows the adventurers to claim the spellbook of Krystival Valorek. But they are not the only ones who want it. Agents of Aundair, Karrnath, and Breland all arrive in the aftermath, demanding that the heroes turn over the relic. It's up to the adventurers to choose their enemies, decide the spellbook's fate, and possibly determine the future of Khorvaire.

Important NPCs

During the adventure, the heroes interact with a number of intriguing nonplayer characters, many of whom are fixtures in the Eberron campaign setting.

Kelani Thauram (female half-elf): A famous actress in Sharn, Kelani is the daughter of a Karrnathi war hero. *Secret:* She's a member of the Aurum's Silver Concord who meant to use Krystival Valorek's spellbook as a ticket into the Gold Concord, then sell the book.

Drago Daarn (male dwarf): Drago is the main villain of the adventure. *Secret:* A member of the Aurum's Silver Concord, Drago murdered Kelani, took the spellbook, and made the actress's plan his own.

Helais ir'Lantar (male human): Helais is the Aundairian ambassador in Sharn. *Secret:* Not only is Helais a high-ranking member of the Royal Eyes of Aundair (spies loyal to Queen Aurala), he is also a rakshasa noble with ties to the Lords of Dust.

Iyan ir'Talan (male human): The Lord Commander of the Watch in Sharn, Iyan hires the party to investigate Kelani Thauram's murder. *Secret:* He reports to the King's Dark Lanterns of Breland.

Malen Torr (male human): Outwardly, Malen serves as attaché to the Karrnathi ambassador, Syra ir'Tarrn. *Secret:* Spymaster Torr oversees a network of Karrnathi rogues and assassins in Sharn.

Saidan Boromar (male halfling): Saidan is leader of the Boromar Clan, a halfling crime syndicate in Sharn. *Secret:* He's also a high-ranking member of the Aurum's Gold Concord.

Syra ir'Tarrn (female human): Syra is the Karrnathi ambassador in Sharn. *Secret:* She betrayed King Kaius III's trust by giving Krystival Valorek's spellbook to Kelani Thauram.

Thora Tarkanan (female human): A dragon-marked assassin, Thora is the former leader of House Tarkanan. *Secret:* She has pledged the aid of House Tarkanan to Drago Daarn.

Vink Boromar (male halfling): Another member of the Boromar Clan, Vink is Saidan Boromar's nephew. *Secret:* He's a murderous thug.

Zanifer Karissa (female human): This Karrnathi femme fatale works for Malen Torr. *Secret:* She's a vampire.

Quests

In addition to the challenges of combat and investigation offered in the main story line, the adventurers can pick up the following quests.

Major Quest: Solve Kelani's Murder

Level 7 Major Quest (300 XP/character)
The characters complete this quest when they turn Drago Daarn (or his body) over to the King's Dark Lanterns, allowing them to close the case quietly and prevent a major diplomatic incident.

Major Quest: Obtain the Spellbook

Level 8 Major Quest (350 XP/character)
With the spellbook of Krystival Valorek in hand, the characters find themselves in a tense standoff at the adventure's end. It is up to them to determine the fate of the book—and to accept the repercussions of that decision, both for themselves and for Khorvaire.

Treasure

Assign treasure appropriate for the party's level using the parcel technique of treasure distribution described in the *Rules Compendium*™ (page 298). Use the bulk of any gold as Lord Iyan ir'Talan's payment to the adventurers (see "Lord Iyan's Offer," page 5). Place art objects in Kelani's tower (see event 2) or the refuge beneath Sharn (see event 6) and use the gems for the jewelry stolen by Kelani's warforged killers (see event 5). You can also treat the gold plating of the warforged Aurax (see event 6) as an art object of appropriate value.

Running the Adventure

This free-form investigation adventure features plenty of roleplaying opportunities as the characters interact with the various NPCs caught up in the plots that cost Kelani her life. Unlike a combat-oriented adventure in which the encounters occur in a set order, this adventure is designed to allow for more flexibility. Event 1: The Stargazer Incident and Event 6: The Silver Concordian (followed by Event 7: The Spellbook) serve as the bookends to the narrative. The characters' actions and the players' decisions determine the order of the events in between.

Your first game session should focus on event 1, so you need to read at least that material thoroughly to prepare. You'll be doing everyone a big favor if you familiarize yourself with the entire adventure ahead of time. Doing so will provide a sense of what effect the players' actions during event 1 might have on the flow of the narrative, and on how you could change the details of subsequent events to make the story your own.

See the "Order of Events" sidebars throughout the adventure for suggestions on how to alter the narrative if the players take the story in a different direction.

Rests

The characters can take short rests between most encounters. Lord Iyan stresses repeatedly, however, that they must complete the investigation before Kelani's father arrives in Sharn. The characters can take an extended rest during event 4, and they have a chance to take another extended rest before the final encounters in event 6 and event 7. It is important that they take this final extended rest, since the encounters in those events will seriously challenge even a fully rested party.

Adventure Features

Many events in the adventure feature expanded area descriptions—particularly Event 2: Uninvited Guests and Event 3: Embassy Showdown. Combat encounters in these events are not fixed to any particular area, so use the full range of available space to create a memorable running fight.

Blocks of *italic* text in the adventure are meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Descriptions for key areas mentioned in event 1, event 2, and event 3 should be paraphrased from the location key for those events.

Roleplaying Encounters

Some of the events in this adventure are set up as roleplaying encounters. Adjust the XP reward for such encounters according to your sense of how well the characters engage the NPCs, and how successful they are at obtaining the clues and information presented in the encounter. Award only partial XP if the players insist on falling back on skill checks rather than roleplaying the interactions with NPCs, or if they rely too much on allied NPCs to do their talking for them. Alternatively, you can award additional XP if you think that the players' successful roleplaying warrants doing so.

Beginning the Adventure

You can draw the adventurers into the murder mystery in a number of ways, three of which are suggested below. Whatever approach you take, if you are planning to incorporate this adventure into a campaign already set in Sharn, think about giving Iyan ir'Talan and other NPCs "walk-on roles" in earlier adventures. If the disgruntled Lord Commander of the Watch is already aware of the adventurers and their abilities, it makes perfect sense for him to call on them now.

Even if the heroes' only previous experience with the Sharn Watch or the King's Dark Lanterns has involved fighting those organizations, Lord Iyan can use that history as a way to entice the characters to his service. He can promise to expunge their records or provide them with future favors in exchange for investigating Kelani's murder.

Adventure Hooks

Below are three hooks that you can use to bring the heroes into the action.

Heroes for Hire

The adventurers' reputation as heroes with a knack for investigation and the ability to take care of themselves comes to the attention of Iyan ir'Talan. Representatives of the King's Dark Lanterns working with the Sharn Watch approach the characters, asking them to meet with Lord Iyan regarding a time-sensitive and diplomatically tricky assignment.

Wrong Place, Right Time

The characters pass by the Stargazer Theater shortly after the discovery of Kelani's murder. The Sharn Watch and the King's Dark Lanterns are out in force, with orders to detain and question any armed groups in the area. As soon as the officers establish who the characters are and that they have no connection to the murder, one of the Dark Lanterns decides that they are ideal candidates to undertake the investigation. He orders them to accompany him and takes them to meet with Iyan ir'Talan.

A Fallen Friend

One of the adventurers knows Lady Kelani, either in Sharn or through family connections in Karrnath. News of her murder comes from a mutual friend with contacts at the Karrnath embassy, who suggests that the corrupt Sharn Watch cannot be trusted to find the killers. Concerned parties urge the characters to visit the Stargazer Theater and offer their assistance, and Iyan ir'Talan is happy to accept such an offer.

Lord Iyan's Offer

Iyan ir'Talan is not as corrupt as many of his officers, but he has little real interest in purging Sharn of evil. He is comfortable in his position, and as long as the wealthy elite in the city are safe and happy, he feels that he has done his duty. He lacks the spine to oppose the King's Dark Lanterns, so he does whatever they ask of him without fuss as long as the jeopardy to his person or his reputation remains minimal.

When the Sharn Watch or the King's Dark Lanterns bring the heroes before Iyan ir'Talan, read:

You are led to a uniformed man whose bearing suggests that he's more of an aristocrat than a warrior. "I am Iyan ir'Talan, Lord Commander of the Sharn Watch," he says, "and I have need of a group of independent investigators. A murder needs solving, but the victim has . . . political connections best served by an outside investigation."

Lord Iyan has no idea how deep the secrecy and danger surrounding Kelani's death ultimately run. All he cares about is bringing in a group of independent investigators powerful enough that the King's Dark Lanterns can have no cause for complaint.

"Given time, I'm sure I could find others capable of undertaking the task," he continues. "The matter does require some haste, though. Consider yourselves deputized if you must, or revel in the fact that the Lord Commander of the Watch must beg favors from adventurers. Either way, though, Sharn needs your aid."

When the adventurers talk to Lord Iyan, use the following material as guidelines for both his responses and the characters' ability to read between the lines.

Who was murdered? "An actress at the Stargazer Theater. Lady Kelani Thauram was the half-elf daughter of an influential Karrnathi war hero and military general, Yorin Thauram."

History (DC 16): General Yorin Thauram commands the White Lion Brigade, Karrnath's most decorated legion. Like his daughter, he's a half-elf.

Streetwise (DC 16): Kelani is a sensation in Sharn, respected for her acting talent and gifted with great beauty, poise, and intelligence. She has many admirers and suitors, and apparently some enemies as well. Although she's known as "Lady Kelani Thauram" in diplomatic and aristocratic circles, her stage name is "Kelani," and most common folk refer to her as such.

Why the need for outside investigators? "Lady Kelani's death could have grave consequences unless the murderer is found and swiftly brought to justice. Although her fame and her father's rank make Kelani's resurrection all but certain, the Dark Lanterns believe that General Thauram's reaction to the murder might sour relations between Breland and Karrnath. Solving the case before Thauram arrives to claim his daughter's body is likely the only way to prevent a diplomatic disaster."

Lord Iyan presents the characters with credentials marking them as investigators in the service of the Sharn Watch. Each receives a silver badge bearing the growling bear's head emblem of Breland and a three-digit identification number. He offers the adventurers payment in gold and gems for taking on the investigation, with a bonus if they catch Kelani's killer. See "Treasure" (page 4) for details.

Iyan ir'Talan	**Level 8 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 350
HP 88; **Bloodied** 44	**Initiative** +8
AC 24, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21	**Perception** +6
Speed 5	
Traits	
☼ **Aristocratic Authority** ✦ **Aura** 3	
Each minion ally that starts its turn in the aura gains 5 temporary hit points.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage.	
Effect: The target is marked until the end of Iyan's next turn.	
Triggered Actions	
Aristocrat's Favor ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: Iyan is first bloodied.	
Effect (No Action): Iyan gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of the encounter.	
Skills Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +13, Streetwise +13	
Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+6)	
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 18 (+8)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment chainmail, longsword	

The Action

Begin play with event 1, and end with event 7. The order of the events in between depends on the actions of the characters (see "Running the Adventure," page 4).

Event 1: The Stargazer Incident

Combat Encounter Level 9 (2,000 XP) and Skill Challenge (900 XP)

Assuming the characters agree to help solve Kelani's murder, a skycoach brings them and Lord Iyan to the portico of the Stargazer Theater, where four Dark Lantern agents are standing guard. These low-ranking members of the King's Dark Lanterns follow Iyan wherever he goes, although they don't report to him.

Streetwise (DC 16): The Stargazer is neither the largest nor the most prestigious theater in Sharn, but it delivers high-quality productions, and its shows regularly sell out. Built on the rooftop of a great tower in Upper Menthis, the theater is open to the sky and protected from the elements by a force dome.

When the adventurers arrive, read:

Plush seats rise in tiers around a circular stage of burnished black wood that rises three feet above the theater floor. The seating area and the stage are open to the air, and a faintly shimmering dome of magical force stirs the light of the moons and stars above.

Upon the stage is a grisly sight. A body sprawls on its back in a pool of blood—a young woman, brutally beaten to death. Her hands show marks where rings once were, and her bare neck bears the bloody crease of a necklace harshly ripped away. An empty purse lies a few feet from the corpse. The woman's sightless eyes are open wide, and you recognize her face from the marquee posters along the foyer wall. The renowned actress Kelani lies dead before you.

Order of Events

If the adventurers have access to the Raise Dead ritual or the *resurrection* or *restore life* powers, they might elect to raise Kelani from the dead on their own right from the start. The time requirements of the Raise Dead ritual and the need to take an extended rest before using *resurrection* or *restore life* mean that the characters must take the body to a secure location, such as Kelani's residence (see event 2). Iyan ir'Talan strongly objects, but he has no real power to stop the characters if they want to pursue this course of action. Raising Kelani does, however, make the adventurers enemies of the Karrnathi spymaster Malen Torr, who is charged with finding and retrieving the body. See the "Order of Events" sidebars in other events for more information.

Likewise, savvy players might infer that the beholder attack points to a possible connection with House Tarkanan and the aberrant creatures it recruits to its cause. Following that lead can take the characters to Event 5: Rumble at the Lucky Lady, since the Boromar Clan is the best source of information regarding the actions of a rival criminal guild.

The Stargazer Theater

The scene before the adventurers seems obvious at first glance—a wealthy actress was targeted for theft and assault, with deadly consequences. The characters must utilize both keen perception and strong investigative instincts to discover what really happened in the Stargazer.

Light: Magical lamps throughout the theater fill all areas with bright light.

1A. Portico: Skycoaches dock at this open-sided columned porch, loading and off-loading theater patrons every evening. Stairs lead down to exclusive restaurants and boutiques in the tower's lower levels (not depicted on the map).

1B. Foyer: Paintings and mementoes of past productions greet theatergoers as they enter the Stargazer Theater. Kelani headlined several of these productions, including *The Queen of Stone*, *Lost in a Dream*, *Day of Mourning*, *Lhazaar*, and *Howl of the Crimson Wolf*.

1C. Stage: Climbing onto the 3-foot-high stage requires 1 extra square of movement.

Proceed with the skill challenge, below, when the characters inspect Kelani's body. In addition to the details of her murder, any Perception check made to examine the body notes the clue that the killers left behind.

A broken gold chain lies beneath the body, likely damaged when it was pulled from her neck.

The chain is an important clue in Event 5: Rumble at the Lucky Lady (page 20).

1D. Backstage: Dark scrim curtains block off the backstage area. Rows of backdrop tapestries hang from high bars, and props and costumes litter the floor.

1E. Lounge: Comfortable couches and low tables create an inviting area for relaxation. When they are not on the job, the cast and crew of the Stargazer take their leisure here.

A page from Krystival Valorek's spellbook (which Kelani tore out to prove to Helais that she had the book) lies on the floor, dropped when the warforged captured her. Any character who makes a Perception check in this area notices it.

What appeared at first glance to be a scrap of paper cast into a corner of the room is actually a crumpled page scribed in silver ink, its script undecipherable.

Arcana (DC 16): The page is from a spellbook, and it details part of a powerful ritual. The quality of the paper and ink suggests the work of a great wizard.

Stairs from the lounge lead down to the theater's offices and private dressing rooms. (The map does not show these areas.) The adventurers can search these lower chambers, but they contain no clues regarding the murder. Kelani's dressing room is unlocked and has not been disturbed. It contains a dresser with a mirror, a chest holding makeup and fake stage jewelry, a table covered with wooden heads wearing wigs (one of which is designed to look like a medusa's serpent-hair), a costume wardrobe, and a hanging portrait of Kelani in her memorable role as the famed explorer Lhazaar (painted by an anonymous admirer).

1F. Storage: Kelani hid Krystival Valorek's spellbook in an old costume box, then trapped the box with a necrotic glyph of warding (created with the aid of a scroll she took from Malen Torr's office in the Karrnath embassy). The box is now empty. Anyone who opens it without first checking for traps triggers the glyph. Skill checks made to notice and disarm the glyph do not count as successes or failures in the skill challenge.

Glyph of Warding	**Level 7 Trap**
Object	XP 300
Detect Arcana DC 23 or Perception DC 28	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
Triggered Actions	
✧ **Attack** (necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: An unauthorized creature touches an object or passes through a space protected by the glyph.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 3 (living creatures in the burst); +10 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: The glyph disappears.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disable:** Arcana DC 23 or Thievery DC 28 (standard action). *Failure (by 5 or more):* The glyph triggers.	

1G. Seating Area: Steep tiers of plush seats start 5 feet above the foyer floor, with subsequent 5-foot rises as marked on the map. Creatures can move up and down the stairs without difficulty, but the area of the seats is difficult terrain. Climbing from the foyer directly to the seats requires a DC 12 Athletics check.

1H. Arcanists' Platform: From this platform at the top of the theater, apprentice arcanists augment the performance below with illusory light shows and enchantment effects. Shelves along the back walls hold hundreds of bound plays, each annotated with the schedule for magical effects during a performance.

The area is under a powerful and permanent spell effect. Anyone who uses a sustainable illusion power while standing on the platform can sustain the effect as a free action for as long as he or she remains in the theater.

A low railing encloses the platform, which stands 5 feet above the last tier of seats. Climbing up requires a DC 16 Athletics check from the stairs or a DC 11 Athletics check from the seating area.

Kelani's Last Hours

Because she had private access to the theater at any time, Kelani scheduled her meeting with Helais ir'Lantar, then arrived early and climbed to the arcanist's platform (area 1H). Digging through the bound volumes of plays on the platform's bookshelves, she selected a favorite of hers, then drew on the platform's arcane power while using illusion magic to disguise the spellbook as a perfect copy of that play.

Kelani then hid the disguised book in a costume box in the storage room (area 1F). The warforged surprised her while she was waiting for Helais in the lounge. They grabbed her before she could react and questioned her, disturbing the lounge's furniture in the process. In an effort to save herself, Kelani confessed the location of the spellbook. The warforged, expecting a magical trap, dragged her backstage to make her retrieve the relic herself.

With the spellbook in hand, the warforged carried out their orders, killing Kelani on the spot. After carrying her body to the stage, they beat the corpse and stole its finery, creating the appearance that she had tried to defend herself from a common assault and died for her trouble.

Skill Challenge: Investigate Kelani's Murder

To scour the murder scene, the characters must undertake a skill challenge, which is interrupted by a deadly attack. This challenge is organized by area, with different skills applicable to checks in specific parts of the theater. Characters must make the right checks in the right areas to earn successes in the challenge.

The intent is for the players to think like investigators in this scenario, so don't allow them to simply make every conceivable check in every area of the theater. For every three skill checks wasted in this way, impose a –1 penalty to all subsequent checks in the challenge. The longer the characters delay and poke around at random, the better their chances of disturbing or failing to notice the clues the warforged have left behind.

Level: 8 (1,050 XP).

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Heal, History, Insight, Perception, Streetwise.

Success: The characters determine that Kelani hid something in the storage area (1F), then someone murdered her after forcing her to retrieve it. Her killers were heavily armored warriors or warforged, who attempted to make her murder look like an assault gone bad. Paraphrase any information from "Kelani's Last Hours" that the players have not already deduced.

Failure: The characters' incomplete sense of the circumstances of Kelani's murder puts them at a disadvantage. Regardless of how much information they have gleaned from this challenge, all their skill checks in events 2 through 5 take a –2 penalty.

Stage (Area 1C):

- *Perception (DC 16, standard action; one success maximum):* Blood has pooled around the body, but the rest of the stage shows no signs of struggle or combat. Kelani was not killed here.
- *Heal or Streetwise (DC 16, standard action; two successes maximum):* Examination of Kelani's wounds reveals a lack of bruising. She was already dead when most of her injuries were inflicted.

Backstage (Area 1D):

- *Perception (DC 12, standard action; one success maximum):* The scrim curtain next to the storage area shows traces of blood.
- *Perception (DC 24, standard action; two successes maximum):* The doors to the storage area and the lounge show faint gouges at their handles where a heavy metal object (the hands of the warforged enforcers) opened them.

Lounge (Area 1E):

- *Perception (DC 16, standard action; one success maximum):* The informal arrangement of furniture in the lounge is more than haphazard. A brief struggle took place here.

Storage (Area 1F):

- *Arcana or Streetwise (DC 28, free action; one success maximum):* The necrotic glyph of warding is a favored trap among Karrnathi spellcasters.
- *Insight (DC 24, free action; one success maximum):* The trapped costume box is empty, but the necrotic glyph of warding placed on it remains. If something of value was hidden in the box, whoever removed the item knew how to bypass the trap.

Arcanists' Platform (Area 1H):

- *Arcana (DC 16, standard action; two successes maximum):* The latent magic of the platform (see the area description) and its general nature are apparent. Someone has drawn upon that effect recently to prolong a use of illusion magic.
- *History (DC 24, standard action; one success maximum):* The plays bound in these volumes have been staged at the Stargazer in recent years. Someone has gone through these books recently and reshelved them in the wrong order.

Death from Above

When the adventurers have attained three successes in the skill challenge, the attack of a beholder interrupts their investigation.

Because the Sharn Watch is rife with corruption, a number of House Tarkanan spies have been able to infiltrate its ranks as investigators. When Thora Tarkanan (see event 6) learned of Iyan ir'Talan's plan to bring in outside investigators, she panicked. Without notifying Drago Daarn, she sent a Tarkanan-allied beholder to the Stargazer with orders to kill the investigation—and the investigators with it.

When the beholder attacks, read:

A whooshing sound fills the silence of the theater—not from within, but from above. The shimmering expanse of the ceiling dome reveals a beholder dropping from the sky, tearing through the barrier as it falls.

Force Dome: The Stargazer's domed roof keeps the theater safe from the elements. A creature can pass through the barrier with a DC 24 Strength or Arcana check. The beholder uses the antimagic effect of its central eye to punch through the dome without a check. (The barrier reconstitutes behind it.)

Beholder **Level 9 Solo Artillery**
Large aberrant magical beast XP 2,000

HP 392; **Bloodied** 196 **Initiative** +9
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 22 **Perception** +11
Speed 0, fly 4 (hover) All-around vision, darkvision
Saving Throws +5 **Action Points** 2

Traits

All-Around Vision
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the beholder.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage.

Eye Rays ✦ At-Will
Effect: The beholder uses two of the following eye rays, using each against a different target. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.
1. *Charm Ray* (charm): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; the target is dominated until the end of its next turn.
2. *Wounding Ray* (necrotic): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 6 necrotic damage.
3. *Sleep Ray* (charm): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; the target is immobilized (save ends).
   First Failed Saving Throw: The target is knocked unconscious instead of immobilized (save ends).
4. *Telekinesis Ray:* Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; the beholder slides the target up to 4 squares.
5. *Slowing Ray* (necrotic): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
6. *Brilliant Ray* (radiant): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; 1d6 + 5 radiant damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).
7. *Terror Ray* (fear, psychic): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the beholder pushes the target up to its speed.
8. *Petrifying Ray:* Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; the target is petrified (save ends).
   Aftereffect: The target is immobilized (save ends).
9. *Death Ray* (necrotic): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 necrotic damage. If the target is bloodied before or after the attack, it is also dazed (save ends).
   First Failed Saving Throw: The target is dazed and weakened (save ends both).
   Second Failed Saving Throw: The target dies.
10. *Disintegrate Ray:* Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

Eye Ray Frenzy ✦ Recharge ⚅
Requirement: The beholder must be bloodied.
Effect: As *eye rays* above, except the beholder makes three eye ray attacks.

Minor Actions

Central Eye ✦ At-Will (1/round)
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +12 vs. Will
Hit: The target cannot use encounter or daily attack powers until the end of its next turn.

Triggered Actions

Random Eye Ray ✦ At-Will
Trigger: The beholder is conscious and an enemy starts its turn within 5 squares of it.
Effect (No Action): The beholder uses one random eye ray against the triggering enemy.

Str 18 (+8)	**Dex** 20 (+9)	**Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 18 (+8)	**Int** 19 (+8)	**Cha** 20 (+9)

Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech

The dome rises 60 feet above the stage and blocks line of effect except for magical ranged and area attacks, which pass through it unimpeded.

Tactics: The beholder is daunted by a unified show of resistance. If reduced to 50 hit points or fewer, it flees, breaking through the dome once more.

The beholder recognizes that the adventurers are the real threat, and it does not target other characters unless it has no choice.

Allies: Iyan ir'Talan (see page 5) fights on the side of the adventurers, staying close to other melee characters and looking for opportunities to flank.

The Dark Lantern agents accompanying Lord Iyan have no ranged attacks, so they wait to press the beholder in melee while relying on *distant evasion* to avoid its *eye rays*. Though the agents do not follow Iyan ir'Talan's orders, they are treated as allies for the purpose of his *aristocratic authority* aura.

If the beholder appears to be too much of a challenge (as it might be for a 7th-level party), you can give ranged attacks to Iyan ir'Talan and the Dark Lanterns.

4 Dark Lantern Agents **Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +5
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18 **Perception**+4
Speed 6

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage.
Effect: The agent can shift up to 2 squares before or after making the attack.

Triggered Actions

Distant Evasion ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An enemy hits the agent with a ranged attack or area attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The triggering enemy rerolls the attack roll and must use the second result.

Str 14 (+5)	**Dex** 11 (+3)	**Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 13 (+4)	**Int** 10 (+3)	**Cha** 13 (+4)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, short sword

Unexpected Company

In the aftermath of the beholder attack, Helais ir'Lantar of Aundair arrives at the Stargazer Theater for his meeting with the actress, not knowing her fate. Iyan ir'Talan allows the adventurers to question the ambassador, mindful that the Dark Lanterns are watching.

In the aftermath of the fight, or while the characters are taking a short rest, read:

Activity at the portico catches your attention. A luxury skycoach lands, the dragonhawk of Aundair emblazoned on its side. As the Dark Lanterns move to meet it, guards wearing the Royal Eyes of Aundair livery leap off, hands on their swords. A handsome and urbane male human steps down to the platform behind them and strides boldly into the theater.

"I am Ambassador Helais ir'Lantar, servant of Queen Aurala of Aundair, here on private business. Might I ask what's going on?"

DEAD ENDS?

The adventurers might want to learn more about the dead actress by questioning her colleagues, theater employees, and patrons who reportedly knew her well. Such investigation is most likely to occur after the encounters with the beholder (see "Death from Above") and Helais ir'Lantar (see "Unexpected Company"). Although such lines of questioning shed little light on Kelani's murder, they do reveal that she was universally popular and thoroughly dedicated to her craft.

Use the following information to guide your answers to the heroes' questions.

What was Kelani like? "She was smart, independent, and regal in bearing—very much like the characters she played on stage."

What was her last role? "Sheshka, the queen of the medusas in Droaam. She liked playing villains."

Did Kelani have any enemies? "No, everyone adored her. She was so charming and generous."

Did her father have enemies? "Too many to count, one supposes. He's a war hero and a high-ranking officer in the Karrnathi military. You don't rise to his position without infuriating someone."

Why did Kelani not use her family name? "She wanted to make it on her own, without having to rely on her family's name or her father's connections."

Did she have any secret admirers or disturbed fans? "Kelani had many admirers, from commoners to aristocrats, but she never spoke ill of any of them. The King himself once kissed her hand and called her performance spellbinding."

Does Kelani have a manager? "No, she preferred to manage her own career."

Did she have any troubles? "I doubt it."

Did she have any confidants or close friends? "Well, she had tea with the Karrnathi ambassador at least once a week. That's how she kept in touch with her homeland. Beyond that, I'm not sure."

Was she politically active? "No."

Was Kelani seeing anyone? "Kelani kept her relationships private and never spoke of anyone in particular, but her tastes were very broad. She enjoyed the company of both men and women."

Did Kelani ever say or do anything that seemed strange or out of character? "If she was in trouble, she hid it well. She was an actress, after all."

Where did she live? "She had a tower not far from the theater, in the Upper Menthis Plateau. Beautiful view, or so I'm told."

Ambassador Helais ir'Lantar has sworn an oath to the Royal Eyes of Aundair, and he professes to greatly admire Queen Aurala for her beauty, wit, and diplomatic acumen. In truth, his loyalty lies with the Lords of Dust, for "Helais" is a rakshasa. He shares the position of Aundair's ambassador to Sharn with a human named Alais ir'Lantar, whose likeness Helais imitates and who knows Helais's sinister secret. The two pass themselves off as twin brothers, and neither one truly holds Queen Aurala in high regard.

Though Helais is well above the party's level, he avoids combat whenever possible so as not to draw attention to his true nature or allegiance. He fights only if cornered, and he prefers to render enemies unconscious rather than kill them. (One never knows when they might prove useful.)

Helais knows that the presence of Dark Lanterns at the Stargazer means that Kelani's plans have likely gone awry. His diplomatic immunity protects him even if his purpose here is known, however, and he wants to discover Kelani's fate.

When the adventurers talk to Helais, use the following material as guidelines for both his responses and the characters' ability to read between the lines.

Why are you here? "I was invited here by Lady Kelani Thauram, to undertake discussions that are no concern of yours. Where is the lady, and who are you to presume to question me?"

What do you know of Kelani's murder? "The lady murdered? This is as much a shock to me as it will be to all Sharn. Why do you waste time prattling here when you should be seeking her killers? Or have the perpetrators already been caught?"

Insight (DC 24): Helais is a practiced diplomat, but his shock at hearing of the murder seems genuine.

Did your meeting with Kelani have anything to do with a spellbook? "Certainly not. What spellbook do you speak of?"

Insight (DC 24): The ambassador is not as surprised to hear of the spellbook as he lets on.

Ideally, you should frame any response from Helais in the form of a follow-up question from him designed to discover what happened to Kelani, whether she truly possessed Valorek's spellbook as she claimed, and where the book might now be. Since the characters have no knowledge of the spellbook at this point, Helais provides no hints as to its identity.

The Royal Eyes agents accompanying the ambassador keep a watchful eye on the adventurers as long as their questions for Helais remain respectful. The agents respond to any threat by attacking, but Iyan ir'Talan defuses the situation by ordering the ambassador to depart.

Ambassador Helais ir'Lantar **Level 19 Controller**
Medium immortal humanoid, rakshasa XP 2,400

HP 182; **Bloodied** 91 **Initiative** +14
AC 33, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 31 **Perception** +19
Speed 7 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

⊕ **Savage Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
Hit: 4d6 + 10 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of Helais's next turn. If the target is already blinded, it is instead stunned (save ends) .

Restrain Creature (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +22 vs. Will
Hit: The target is restrained until Helais ends the effect as a minor action or until the target ends the effect as a move action.
Aftereffect: The target takes 3d8 + 8 psychic damage.

Frightful Phantom (fear, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +22 vs. Will
Hit: 4d8 + 15 psychic damage, and the target must use a free action to move its speed away from Helais, provoking opportunity attacks as normal.

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Helais disguises himself to appear as any Medium humanoid until he uses this power again or until he drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can use a DC 38 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

Skills Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, History +21, Insight +19
Str 21 (+14) **Dex** 20 (+14) **Wis** 20 (+14)
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 24 (+16) **Cha** 24 (+16)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common

2 Royal Eyes Agents **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 300 each

HP 75; **Bloodied** 37 **Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21 **Perception** +10
Speed 6

Traits

Combat Advantage
The agent deals 2d6 extra damage on melee attacks and ranged attacks against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Rapier** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, and if the agent is marked by the target, that condition ends.

Hand Crossbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

Flamboyant Strike (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, the agent can slide the target 1 square, and the target is dazed until the end of the agent's next turn.

Minor Actions

Information is Power ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Close burst 5 (one creature in the burst); +10 vs. Will
Hit: The target grants combat advantage to the agent (save ends).

Cunning Escape ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: If the agent is marked, that condition ends. In addition, the agent can shift 1 square.

Skills Bluff +13, History +9, Insight +10, Streetwise +13, Thievery +12
Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 11 (+3) **Int** 13 (+4) **Cha** 21 (+8)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, thieves' tools

Conclusion

When the adventurers have completed their investigation, the Dark Lanterns arrange to have Kelani's body taken to the Karrnath embassy. Word of her death will be sent to her father in Korth, and ir'Talan expects that he will come immediately to Sharn to oversee the process of raising Kelani from the dead.

Unless the adventurers have reasons to do otherwise, Lord Iyan suggests that they go to Kelani's residence and search for additional clues regarding the spellbook, or any hint of why she was murdered.

Event 2: Uninvited Guests

Combat Encounter Level 7 (1,704 XP) and Investigation Encounter (300 XP)

Kelani's residence is a luxurious tower suite in Sharn's Upper Menthis Plateau. With no real sense yet of what relic was taken from the Stargazer Theater, the adventurers can search her apartments for further clues. Agents of the Karrnathi ambassador, who is desperate to have the spellbook returned, have the same idea.

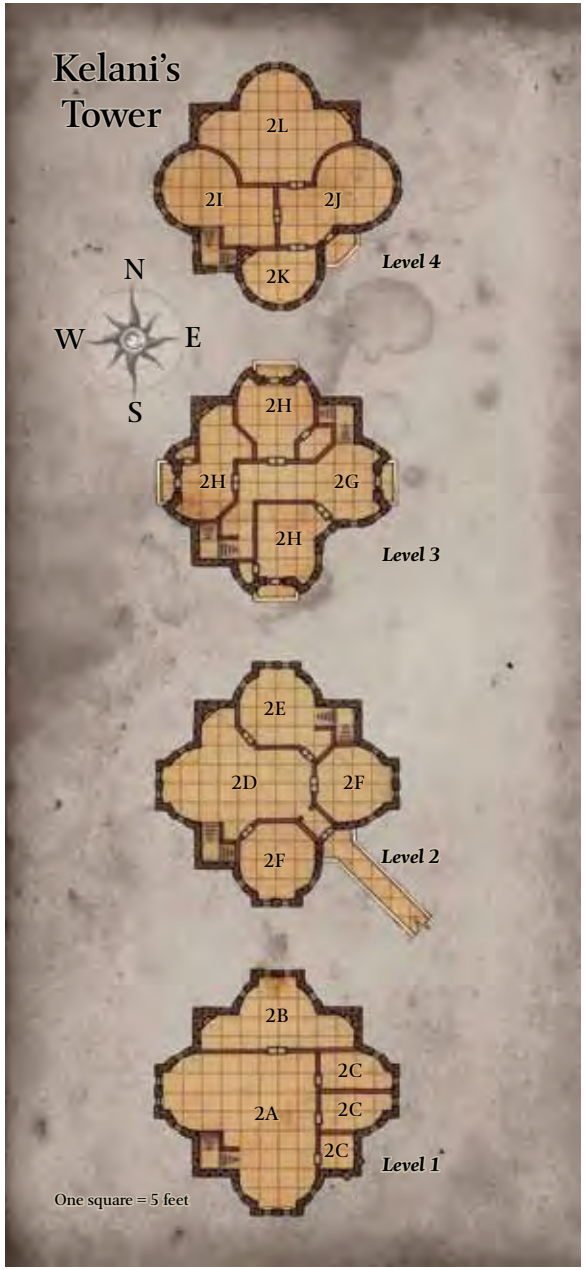
Kelani's Tower

Iyan ir'Talan gives the characters directions to Kelani's tower apartments, but neither he nor the Dark Lanterns accompany them there. Trying to delay the public release of the news about Kelani's murder is their first priority now.

The tower is currently empty. The Dark Lanterns took Kelani's servants in for questioning and are keeping them out of the adventurers' way.

Light: The tower is dark to begin with. All areas feature magic lamps that can be brightened or darkened as a minor action while in the same area as the lamp.

2A. Dining Hall: Kelani and her guests take their meals in this formal dining room, which features a



ORDER OF EVENTS

Most likely, the adventurers will come to Kelani's residence immediately after their investigation at the Stargazer Theater. If they visit the Karrnath embassy (event 3) first, Zanifer Karissa's appearance here is in reaction to Syra ir'Tarrn's dealings with the heroes. Whatever agreement the ambassador has struck with them, the duplicitous spymaster Malen Torr has acted on his own initiative. Zanifer's orders are to neutralize the adventurers, discover what they know, then kill them and find the missing spellbook. Modify the combat encounter setup as appropriate.

If the adventurers have come here with Kelani's corpse hoping to raise her, Zanifer and her group arrive in search of the body. After the vampire and her minions have been defeated and Kelani has been raised, the actress recognizes Zanifer as an agent of Malen Torr. She suggests that the adventurers escort her to the Karrnath embassy before more of the spymaster's forces come after them.

table for twelve and a fountain that magically dispenses water, wine, or spirits on command.

2B. Kitchen: Tables and shelves line the walls, and a huge stove and oven occupy the northern alcove. Pots and pans hanging from the ceiling make most of this area lightly obscured.

2C. Storage: Foodstuffs and household goods are kept in these three chambers, the southernmost of which is a magical cold-storage area.

2D. Meeting Hall: The main entrance to Kelani's apartments is a sumptuous chamber furnished with couches, side tables, and life-sized wax sculptures of the actress dressed for her many roles, including the legendary seafarer Lhazaar, the medusa Sheshka, the ruthless Aundairian archmage Ivallia ir'Haladon, a Karrnathi war widow named Sylvira ir'Kanek, and Queen Dannel of Cyre. A 2-foot-high riser in the center of the room serves as a stage for musical performances.

2E. Parlor: Kelani entertains privately in her parlor, a chamber opulently appointed with plush leather couches and exotic plants.

2F. Servants' Quarters: Three servants dwell in each of these drab chambers.

2G. Sitting Room: Kelani's guests share access to a comfortable lounge adorned with mementos celebrating her successful career. Prominent among these are theater posters of various plays, including *The Queen of Stone*, *Lost in a Dream*, *Day of Mourning*, *Lhazaar*, and *Howl of the Crimson Wolf*, all with the name "Kelani" prominently displayed. In the middle of the room stands a magically illuminated alabaster pedestal with nothing on it. A golden statuette shaped like a tower (an award that Kelani won for her lead role in *Lhazaar*) stood atop this pedestal until it was stolen by Drago Daarn's warforged thugs. Drago gave the statue as a prize to his warforged henchman Aurax, who has a "thing" for gold (see event 6).

2H. Guest Rooms: Each of these chambers has a comfortable bed, a heavy desk, and two smaller sleeping pallets for servants.

2I. Rehearsal Space: The eastern portion of this chamber is a library filled with plays, books of poetry, and treatises on the arts. Illusion magic imbued into the walls of the western section creates the impression of walking onstage in a theater filled with patrons. Kelani uses this area for private rehearsals.

2J. Study: Kelani's study contains bookshelves and a large empty table. It also holds the extradimensional vault in which the actress keeps her most valuable possessions. Kelani hid the spellbook here for a while before taking it to the theater.

History (DC 16): The books on the shelves are a selection of Khorvaire's most important literary and philosophical works.

Perception (DC 16): The patina of dust clinging to the books suggests they are here only for show.

Perception (DC 24): Four books on a low shelf show signs of frequent handling. Removing them reveals a shimmering keyhole in the wall beyond.

Thievery (DC 24): If someone successfully picks this magical "lock," the top of the table shimmers and fades from view, revealing an extradimensional space beneath it. (Anything sitting on the table when the space is activated falls into it.)

Kelani stored her most treasured personal trinkets here, including dried flowers, love letters (not including those from Syra), and jewelry. A second page torn from the spellbook is here, kept by Kelani as a token of her plots. It is easily identifiable as a companion to the page found in the Stargazer Theater.

Kelani's mementoes can be taken and sold (see "Treasure," page 4), but they offer no clues to her murder.

2K. Bedroom: This small bedchamber was originally designed for children, but Kelani has converted it into a guest suite. On the occasions when Ambassador Syra slept over, bodyguards stayed in this room for security.

Perception (DC 16): A recent occupant of this chamber has brazenly and crudely carved the wolf's-head emblem of Karrnath into a fine tabletop.

2L. Master Bedchamber: Kelani's opulent bedroom features a four-poster bed, several couches and side tables, a theatrical makeup table, and a curtained-off bath chamber with magical hot and cold running water. A number of love letters signed "Syra" sit discarded in a wastepaper basket, along with an invitation to a dull-sounding diplomatic event at the Karrnath embassy in a week's time.

Streetwise (DC 16): The Karrnathi ambassador in Sharn is named Syra ir'Tarrn.

Not Alone

Give the adventurers time to search about half of Kelani's residence before Zanifer and her vampire spawn arrive.

When Zanifer arrives, read:

The sound of a door slamming shut echoes throughout the tower. A woman's voice rises, calling out orders. "Go upstairs and down. Tear the place apart."

Zanifer is under orders to leave no loose ends in her search for the spellbook, so she and her vampire spawn will attack the adventurers on sight. The characters have ample opportunity to hide and wait for the foes to come to them.

A Running Fight: Kelani's tower can make a memorable battleground, letting the adventurers use furnishings and other "terrain" to their advantage. Place furniture and other items at your discretion as the fight spills from room to room. A low object such as a chair, a couch, a desk, or a bed is difficult terrain and provides partial cover. Any larger fixture such as a table, a statue, or a fountain provides superior cover and requires a DC 12 Athletics check to move through. A hanging plant, a drape, or a similar item provides partial concealment.

Tactics: Zanifer splits up her force, searching the second level with four vampire spawn while four other spawn descend to the first level. If the characters refrain from attacking at once, they have a chance to divide and conquer.

Zanifer uses *mist form* as often as necessary, falling back from powerful combatants to take on characters who are more susceptible to her *blood drain* power. If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, she attempts to flee the residence as mist.

The Vampire Captain

Zanifer Karissa served as a captain in the Last War, conducting reconnaissance behind enemy lines in Breland. Before the King's Dark Lanterns could catch up to her, she returned to Karrnath with critical military intelligence and earned herself a medal and an audience with Regent Moranna ir'Wynarn. Suspecting that the Dark Lanterns might have coerced Zanifer, Moranna turned the captain into a vampire and used her hold over the new spawn to discover the truth: Zanifer was not a double agent after all, but always had been a loyal Karrnathi soldier.

The regent then released Zanifer from thralldom and reassigned her to Sharn, putting her knowledge of Breland to use by making her an advisor to Spymaster Malen Torr of the Karrnath embassy. Zanifer isn't fond of her employer, but she remains a patriot. Her family died in the Last War, and all she has left is her loyalty to the Karrnathi crown. She obeys Torr's orders without question, and she has turned some of Sharn's dregs into vampire thralls under her command. She considers these creatures disposable.

If the heroes capture Zanifer, she bargains for her freedom by offering information about who sent her, trusting that Malen Torr can handle the adventurers. She admits that her employer sent her to Kelani's tower residence in search of "some ancient spellbook." She does not know what the book is or why Malen wants it.

Zanifer Karissa **Level 10 Elite Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 1,000

HP 194; **Bloodied** 97 **Initiative** +11
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22 **Perception** +12
Speed 8, climb 4 (spider climb) Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Burned by Sunlight
Whenever Zanifer starts her turn in direct sunlight, she takes 10 radiant damage.

Regeneration
Zanifer regains 10 hit points whenever she starts her turn and has at least 1 hit point. If Zanifer takes radiant damage, her regeneration does not function on her next turn.

Standard Actions

Clawed Gauntlet (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 11 damage.

Blood Drain (healing) ✦ **Recharge** when an adjacent creature becomes bloodied
Attack: Melee 1 (one dazed or dominated creature); +13 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d12 + 5 damage, the target is weakened (save ends), and Zanifer regains 20 hit points.

Dominating Gaze (charm) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +13 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends).

Irresistible Lure (charm) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close burst 5 (one or two creatures in the burst). Zanifer pulls the target to a space adjacent to her and uses *clawed gauntlet* twice. If she hits the same target with both attacks, it is also dazed until the end of her next turn.

Minor Actions

Mist Form (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Zanifer becomes insubstantial, gains a fly speed of 12 (hover), and cannot attack. She can end this effect as a minor action.

Skills Intimidate +16, Stealth +16, Streetwise +16
Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 19 (+9) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 22 (+11)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment clawed gauntlet

8 Sharn Vampire Spawn **Level 8 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 88 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +10
AC 22, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19 **Perception** +9
Speed 8, climb 4 (spider climb) Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic

Traits

Destroyed by Sunlight
A vampire spawn that begins its turn in direct sunlight can take only a single move action on its turn. If it ends its turn in direct sunlight, it burns to ash and is destroyed.

Standard Actions

Bite (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 5 damage, and 5 ongoing necrotic damage (save ends). A target already taking ongoing necrotic damage instead increases its current ongoing necrotic damage by 2.

Move Actions

Unnatural Leap ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The vampire spawn jumps up to 6 squares. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 11 (+4)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 14 (+6)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common

Conclusion

Award XP for this event's investigation activity according to how effectively the characters uncovered and interpreted the clues in the study and the bedrooms.

Zanifer carries a token of diplomatic passage marked with the seal of Karrnath and magically signed by Malen Torr. This token and the love letters found in Kelani's bedchamber are both important in event 3.

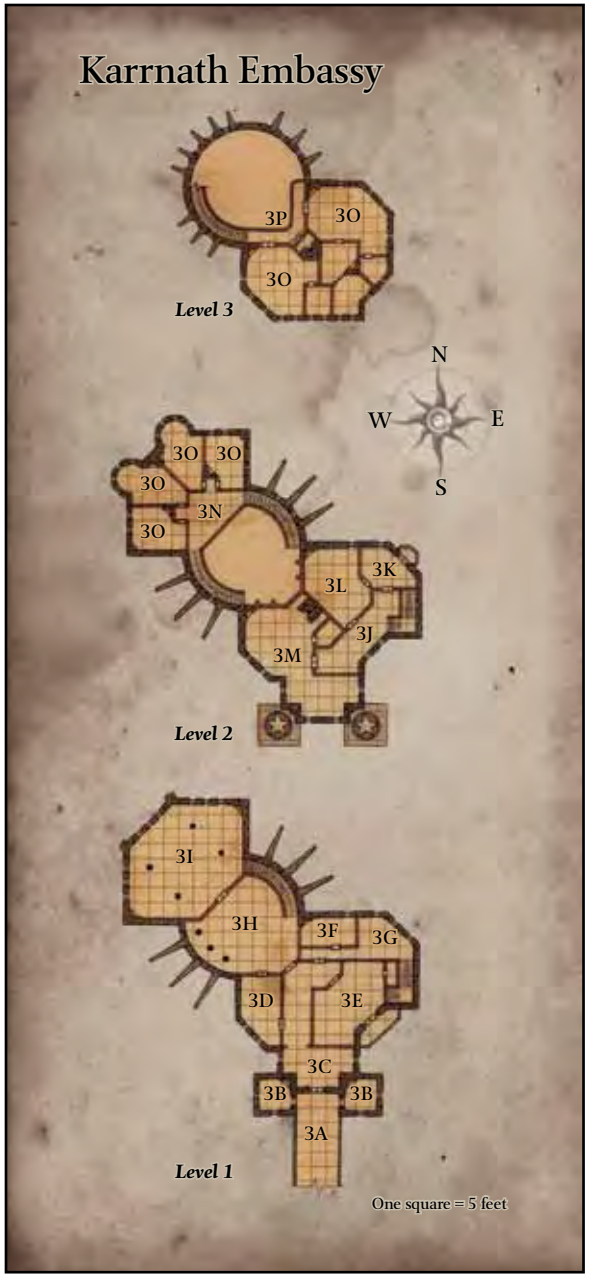
Event 3: Embassy Showdown

Roleplaying Encounter (900 XP) and Possible Combat Encounter (Level Variable)

The heroes journey to the Karrnath embassy to confront Ambassador Syra ir'Tarrn. From her, they learn of Kelani's role in the Aurum and what she planned to do with the spellbook. Spymaster Malen Torr isn't far away. He stands ready to lock down the embassy and use every guard at his disposal to eliminate the heroes if the situation turns ugly.

ORDER OF EVENTS

The adventurers most likely come to the embassy on the basis of the clues found at Kelani's residence. Without those clues in hand, getting into the embassy requires an even greater degree of diplomacy, bribery, or sneaky infiltration (see "To Fight or Not To Fight," page 16). Additionally, their interactions with Malen Torr in this event inspire the spymaster to seek revenge if they later go to Kelani's residence. See the "Order of Events" sidebar in event 2 for more information.



The Embassy

The Karrnath embassy is a tower-fortress in the heart of the Ambassador Towers district in Middle Central. At this late hour, the adventurers have no problem arriving unseen.

As the characters approach the embassy, read:

This brooding fortress captures the stark, cold spirit of Karrnath. A skybridge leads to a heavy door whose glowing runes testify to the magic that wards it. At the windows of twin guardrooms stand helmed sentinels, including a captain wearing an eyepatch who speaks in a low growl.

"State your business, or be on your way."

Light: Bright magical light shines throughout the embassy.

3A. Gate: An elite necrotic glyph of warding wards the embassy gate. Characters accompanied by a guard escort do not trigger the glyph. A character in possess-ion of Zanifer's diplomatic token (see the conclusion to event 2) can also pass through safely.

Elite Glyph of Warding Object	**Level 7 Elite Trap** XP 600
Detect Arcana 28 or Perception DC 32 **Immune** attacks	**Initiative** –
Triggered Actions	
Attack (necrotic) ✦ **Encounter** *Trigger:* An unauthorized creature touches an object or passes through a space protected by the glyph. *Attack (Immediate Reaction):* Close burst 3 (living creatures in the burst); +10 vs. Reflex *Hit:* 4d6 + 4 necrotic damage and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends). *Aftereffect:* 4d6 + 4 necrotic damage.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disable:** Arcana DC 28 or Thievery DC 32 (standard action). *Failure (by 5 or more):* The glyph triggers.	

3B. Guardrooms: Captain Kanarr Talan and six embassy guards stand on duty. The Karrnathi are less than friendly at the best of times, and if the characters arrive between dusk and dawn, they find the embassy sealed up tight. See "For King and Karrnath," page 16.

3C. Entrance Hall: Routine visitors to the embassy are directed to wait (typically for extended periods) on rough benches along the walls here.

3D. Records Room: This room serves as a storage space for routine diplomatic correspondence and paperwork. All privileged communications are kept in Malen Torr's office (area 3E).

3E. Spymaster's Office: Malen Torr has commandeered this space for his own needs, and he sleeps here on a rough pallet most nights. If Malen invites the adventurers into his office (see "The Master of Shadows," page 17), four embassy guards stand watch outside. Each door has an alarm and a necrotic glyph of warding that Malen, the guards, or a character carrying Zanifer's diplomatic token can bypass.

Glyph of Warding Object	**Level 7 Trap** XP 300
Detect Arcana DC 23 or Perception DC 28 **Immune** attacks	**Initiative** –
Triggered Actions	
Attack (necrotic) ✦ **Encounter** *Trigger:* An unauthorized creature touches an object or passes through a space protected by the glyph. *Attack (Immediate Reaction):* Close burst 3 (living creatures in the burst); +10 vs. Reflex *Hit:* 4d6 + 4 necrotic damage and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disable:** Arcana DC 23 or Thievery DC 28 (standard action). *Failure (by 5 or more):* The glyph triggers.	

3F. Kitchen: Guards and other staff have no living quarters in the embassy—they eat and rest in this drab dining room while on duty. The embassy

guards keep a secret cache of six *potions of healing* hidden beneath loose floor tiles (Perception DC 16 check to locate).

3G. Weapon Racks: The embassy guards store and maintain their weapons here.

3H. Great Atrium: Comfortable couches and refreshment tables provide amenities for important visitors. In the event of attack, Captain Talan and Malen Torr can remotely activate a necrotic glyph of warding at the midpoint of each curving staircase.

3I. Main Hall: This chamber contains four large wooden tables and two dozen chairs. Space is available for additional seating for conferences and other large-scale events.

Unless the characters have already claimed it, Kelani's body rests beneath a shroud on a table in the center of the room. The shroud is black and emblazoned with the Karrnathi emblem, a crimson wolf's head.

3J. Guard Post: Four embassy guards stand at attention at the doors to the ambassador's suite and the library at all times.

3K. Staff Office: By day, the ambassador's scribes and messengers are at work here.

3L. Ambassador's Suite: The residence of Ambassador Syra ir'Tarrn is utilitarian and spare, as befits an emissary of Karrnath. A narrow bed, a wardrobe, and an empty weapon rack are the only furnishings.

3M. Library and Study: Bookshelves line the walls in the northern part of this chamber. The southern section has a broad desk and several chairs for visitors.

Syra ir'Tarrn meets with the adventurers here (see "Syra's Story," page 18). On the desk is a necrotic glyph of warding, which attacks all creatures in its area except Syra if she activates it.

3N. Middle Landing: Each level of the atrium is 10 feet above the next. Climbing between levels requires a DC 16 Athletics check. A creature that falls from the middle landing to the first level takes 1d10 damage.

3O. Guest Quarters: These drab bedchambers house low-level functionaries and messengers from Karrnath. The larger guest quarters on the third level are better appointed and feature adjoining chambers for use as servants' quarters or private studies.

3P. Upper Landing: See the middle landing. A creature that falls from the upper landing to the first level takes 2d10 damage.

For King and Karrnath

Captain Kanarr Talan leads the garrison that guards the Karrnath embassy in Sharn. He and the twenty guards under his command are willing to die in the service of Karrnath and its ambassador.

The captain lost his left eye in the Last War and wears an eye patch. Many stories circulate about what happened (a drunken brawl, a spurned lover, and a lost bet with a Lhazaar prince are the most common), and Kanarr refutes none of them.

The adventurers must go through Captain Talan to enter the embassy by the front gate. They can do so most easily by showing him either the token carried by Zanifer, or Syra ir'Tarrn's love letters, along with a successful DC 16 Diplomacy check or Bluff check. If they are unsuccessful (or if they have none of those items), they must win over the guards with a bribe of 10 gp each plus 50 gp for Captain Talan, who decides to wake Malen Torr and let him deal with this rabble.

Kanarr does not like Spymaster Torr, believing him to be a treacherous warmonger, but the captain is too shrewd to risk the spymaster's ire by sharing his concerns with the ambassador. He is eager to hear anything the adventurers can tell him that points to Malen Torr's involvement in actions that put Karrnath or the embassy at risk.

Insight (DC 16, in response to word of the vampire's attack or at the sight of the token she carried): The captain's interest in your information seems more than

TO FIGHT OR NOT TO FIGHT

Event 3 is primarily a roleplaying encounter. If players are up to that challenge, they can obtain the information they need while staying on the good side of Syra ir'Tarrn and Malen Torr. In keeping with the flexible setup of this adventure, however, combat in the embassy becomes more likely under two scenarios.

We Don't Need No Diplomacy: Once the characters are inside the embassy, any attempt to threaten or coerce Malen Torr or Syra ir'Tarrn results in an immediate military response. The four embassy guards on duty outside the spymaster's office or the ambassador's suite enter the fight 1 round after they are called, or after they hear any sound of combat or struggle. Four more guards arrive each round thereafter, to a total of twenty. Captain Talan and Malen Torr arrive with the last guards, after sealing all exits from the embassy behind elite necrotic glyphs.

The Back-Door Approach: If the heroes fail at (or decide not to bother with) diplomacy at the gatehouse, breaking into the embassy is an option. Under cover of darkness, characters can climb the walls without anyone spotting them (Athletics DC 16), though only the windows in the upper-level guest quarters can be forced open (Athletics DC 24). A break-in automatically trips a silent magical alarm, causing eight embassy guards to set up outside the guest quarters and wait for the adventurers' exit. When combat begins, additional guards appear as noted above.

Time Out: Even in the midst of combat, the characters can attempt to parlay with roleplaying or an impromptu skill challenge. Syra is desperate to see the spellbook returned, and she joins forces with the adventurers even over the protests of her spymaster.

If any characters die during combat in the embassy, Syra can arrange to have them raised alongside Kelani (see event 4), in exchange for future favors.

says, not bothering to hide his contempt. "Someone wake the spymaster and tell him he has visitors."

Captain Kanarr Talan **Level 6 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 250

HP 76; **Bloodied** 38 **Initiative** +5
AC 22, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 **Perception** +8
Speed 5

Traits

☼ **Brutal Command** ✦ **Aura** 3
Allies in the aura deal 1d6 extra damage with melee attacks and ranged attacks.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 10 damage.
Effect: The target is marked until the end of Kanarr's next turn.

➳ **Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 8 damage.

Minor Actions

⸸ **Shield Slam** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target grants combat advantage until the start of Kanarr's next turn.

Triggered Actions

⸸ **Savage Blade** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An adjacent enemy marked by Kanarr makes an attack that doesn't include him as a target.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (triggering creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 10 damage, and the target falls prone.

Skills Athletics +12, Intimidate +11
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 20 (+8) **Int** 14 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+6)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment chainmail, light shield, longsword, heavy crossbow, 15 bolts, eye patch

20 Embassy Guards **Level 6 Minion Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 63 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +5
AC 22, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 17 **Perception** +8
Speed 5

Standard Actions

⊕ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage.
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the guard's next turn.

➳ **Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage.

Triggered Actions

Shield of Karrnath ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy makes a melee attack or a ranged attack against an ally adjacent to the guard.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The triggering attack targets the guard instead.

Str 17 (+6) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment chainmail, light shield, longsword, heavy crossbow, 15 bolts

The Master of Shadows

Inside the embassy, the adventurers meet first with spymaster Malen Torr, who quizzes them extensively on Kelani's murder. He acknowledges sending Zanifer Karissa to Kelani's home but shrugs off any violence done to the characters as "an unfortunate misunderstanding."

Malen Torr uses his position in the embassy as a shield, behind which he acts in what he considers the best interests of his nation. He respects Ambassador ir'Tarrn's diplomatic prowess, but he knows she has no stomach for espionage and shadow work, and so he does not involve her in such activities. He also knows that the ambassador is lonely, and this loneliness made her vulnerable to Kelani Thauram's charms. If Kelani hadn't been the daughter of a

Malen Torr and Syra ir'Tarrn

Karrnathi war hero, Malen probably would have killed her himself.

Once Malen is aware of the adventurers' central role in the investigation of Kelani's murder, he realizes he can use that fact to his advantage: An independent investigation helps him stay at arm's length from Syra's theft of the spellbook, protecting Karrnath's reputation even if the ambassador must be sacrificed in the process. So he arranges for the characters to meet with her.

Spymaster Malen Torr	**Level 8 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 350
HP 65; **Bloodied** 32	**Initiative** +13
AC 22, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20	**Perception** +12
Speed 6	

Traits

Combat Advantage
Malen deals 2d6 extra damage to any creature granting combat advantage to him.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 6 damage, or 4d6 + 12 if the attack ends Malen's *veil of invisibility*.

† **Poisoned Blade** (poison, weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 5 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target falls unconscious until the end of the encounter or until it takes damage.

Veil of Invisibility (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Malen becomes invisible to all enemies until the start of his next turn or until he attacks.

Skills Insight +12, Intimidate +11, Stealth +14, Streetwise +11

Str 14 (+6)	**Dex** 19 (+9)	**Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 11 (+4)	**Int** 16 (+7)	**Cha** 15 (+6)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment short sword (with a red wolf's head pommel concealing a hidden poison compartment)

Syra's Story

A flustered Syra ir'Tarrn, the Karrnathi ambassador to Sharn, meets with the adventurers in her office. There, she asks for a full accounting of their involvement in the investigation and their thoughts on Kelani's murder.

Syra is a loyal subject of King Kaius III and no stranger to political intrigue. Despite her brilliance, Syra was completely smitten by Kelani Thauram and never imagined that she was being used as a pawn. By allowing Kelani to take Krystival Valorek's spellbook, Syra has placed her career and her life in jeopardy. She wants to retrieve the spellbook before word reaches her superiors that the tome is no longer in the embassy. She is confident in Spymaster Torr's ability to dig her out of the hole she has created for herself, because he has never failed her.

Syra avoids combat, and she will surrender immediately if the adventurers kill all the embassy guards. When the characters question her, use the following material as guidelines for both her responses and the characters' ability to read between the lines.

What is the significance of the page found in the Stargazer Theater? "The page is from the spellbook of Krystival Valorek, a powerful archmage of Aundair. Krystival was in Cyre on the Day of Mourning and died like so many others, but his spellbook survived. Karrnathi adventurers eventually recovered it and entrusted it to the keeping of this embassy."

How did Kelani get the spellbook? "Kelani learned of the spellbook from me, and I allowed her to borrow it in secret, because of her love of lore and history. She kept it securely at her residence, but I no longer know its whereabouts."

Insight (DC 12; the adventurers must have already searched Kelani's residence): Kelani's only dedication was to her career. Her dusty collection of books and art speaks to a lack of love for either lore or history.

What was Kelani's real motivation for wanting the spellbook? "Kelani was a member of the Aurum. Like many members of that organization, she collected powerful relics and secrets as a means to elevate her position. She knew that if she could obtain the lost spellbook of Krystival Valorek, the Gold Concordians would accept her into their ranks."

How did she plan to do this? "Kelani spoke of meeting someone to prove the truth of her possession. Because she was trying to protect me, she did not give me the person's name."

Insight (DC 16): Syra is less convinced of Kelani's sincere desire to protect her than she lets on. After the fact, she sees deceit in the actress's actions.

Conclusion

Award XP for this event's roleplaying according to how well the characters engaged the NPCs, and how successful they were at obtaining the clues and information available. Determine any combat XP from the foes the adventurers faced and how effective their response was. Include any necrotic glyphs the adventurers successfully overcome.

Whether or not Syra reveals the whole truth of Kelani's need for the spellbook, she finishes by offering the adventurers the ultimate lead in a murder investigation—the chance to interview the victim.

"Kelani's body is here. A sending has been made to her father in Karrnath, who has instructed that no one is to see or touch the body until he arrives in Sharn with his ritualists. I would speak to Kelani before then, however. If you promise to find those responsible for this heinous act, I will let you ask Kelani what she knows."

Syra's offer assumes that the adventurers have access to the Raise Dead ritual or the *resurrection* or *restore life* power. If the characters have no such abilities, adjust the offer so that Syra has already made other arrangements to have Kelani raised.

Event 4: Kelani Speaks

Roleplaying Encounter (750 XP)

In the main hall of the embassy, Kelani's body lies waiting for her father's arrival. Over Malen Torr's objections, Ambassador Syra ir'Tarrn allows the adventurers to raise the actress from the dead. (If the characters have no power to do so, Syra has already decided to bring in a ritualist who will raise Kelani early, against her father's wishes.)

Whether Kelani is raised by a ritual or a power, the adventurers can take an extended rest during this part of the event. Once Kelani is restored to life and ready to receive company, the meeting takes place in one of the guest quarters on the third level of the embassy.

When the raising of Kelani is complete and the adventurers have rested, read:

Kelani sits in the guest room, sipping a beverage with an imperious air. Syra ir'Tarrn stands quietly some distance away. Whatever conversation these two have had, it seems clear that Syra has reconsidered her feelings for the actress.

"So," Kelani says with a thin smile. "My saviors, as it were. It seems an odd thing to investigate a murder once the victim is no longer dead. Makes it almost too easy, don't you think?"

Before her murder, Kelani thought there was nothing she would not do to become a Gold Concordian in the Aurum. In her first moments after returning to life, she realized she had been wrong. The memory of her stark terror and violent death at the hands of warforged assassins has ruined all of Kelani's ambition, and she is done with her former plots—but she is not above seeking vengeance, with the adventurers as her agents. She believes (incorrectly) that Saidan Boromar is behind the attack on her, and she does everything in her power to set the characters on his trail.

ORDER OF EVENTS

If Kelani is raised before the characters come to the Karrnath embassy, adjust this event and the information revealed here as required. You can refocus Kelani's confession so that rather than connecting her killers to the Boromar clan, she suspects that Malen Torr ordered her killed to get the spellbook back. This revelation can take the characters to Event 3: Embassy Showdown. Only after the characters prove Kelani's accusations against Malen Torr to be false does she set her sights on Saidan.

The daughter of the Karrnathi war hero Yorin Thauram came into her own shortly after arriving in Sharn. She quickly gained acclaim as an actress at the Stargazer Theater and won friends among the social elite in the highest towers of the city. Kelani relies on beauty and charm to get what she wants, and her conquests are not limited to members of the opposite gender.

Kelani didn't seek out the Aurum. High-ranking members of the organization came to her with offers to join, either because they found her acting skill mesmerizing or because they coveted the political influence of her father. Months after her initiation into the Copper Concord, she quickly seduced her way into the Silver Concord. Obtaining Krystival Valorek's spellbook should have guaranteed her initiation into the Gold Concord, but fate finally caught up with Kelani.

Kelani Thauram **Level 7 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, half-elf XP 300

HP 77; **Bloodied** 38 **Initiative** +4
AC 21, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21 **Perception** +5
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Traits

☼ **Inspiring Presence** ✦ **Aura** 5
Each ally in the aura gains a +2 power bonus to saving throws.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 10 damage.

Direct Ally ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: As a free action, one ally that Kelani can see moves up to its speed and makes a basic attack with a +2 power bonus to the attack roll.

Minor Actions

Inspire Hesitation (charm) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +10 vs. Will
Hit: The target cannot attack Kelani until the end of Kelani's next turn. The effect ends if Kelani or her allies attack the target or one of the target's allies.

Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Streetwise +13

Str 8 (+2)	**Dex** 12 (+4)	**Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 13 (+4)	**Int** 17 (+6)	**Cha** 20 (+8)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven
Equipment dagger

When the heroes question Kelani, use the following material as guidelines for her responses. Any Insight check made against Kelani demonstrates that she speaks the truth.

What was your goal in getting the spellbook from Syra? "Syra and I were very good friends, though her spymaster, Malen Torr, kept our relationship under wraps. Thanks to his too-watchful eye, I knew I would never be able to steal the book. So I tried another tack."

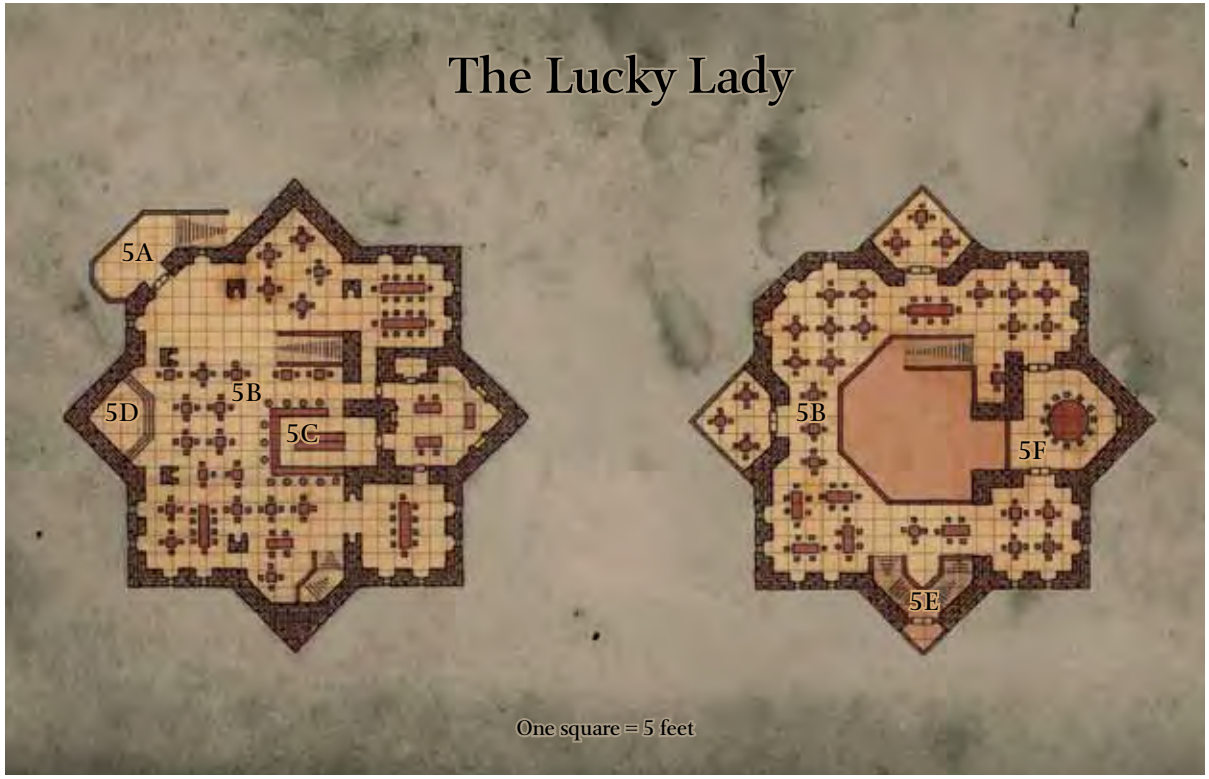
What were you doing in the theater before you were attacked? "I had arranged a meeting with Helais ir'Lantar of the Royal Eyes of Aundair—Queen Aurala's eyes and ears in Sharn. In addition to obtaining entry into the Gold Concord, I planned to sell

Valorek's spellbook back to Aundair for a pretty price. By showing him a page torn from the spellbook to prove its authenticity, I planned to bring Helais under my control, as I have done with so many."

Who killed you? "Three warforged assassins. They showed up as I awaited the Aundairian's arrival. I think they were surprised when I recognized one of them. A month ago, I sang at the Lucky Lady, a tavern owned by Saidan Boromar of the Boromar Clan. The warforged who . . . killed me was a Boromar enforcer. Saidan is a member of the Gold Concord, and apparently ambitious enough to keep me from challenging his position."

What's the importance of the spellbook? "Aurala of Aundair and Kaius of Karrnath know the potential of the book, though Kaius did not share this information with his lackeys." Kelani shoots a sidelong glance at Syra, not bothering to hide her disdain. "Krystival was in Cyre under orders from Adal, brother to Queen Aurala. While there, Krystival used scrying rituals to observe the war effort of Cyre's mages, recording that information in his spellbook. That incredibly powerful scrying magic was active on the Day of Mourning. Thus, Adal believes that Krystival's spellbook might have recorded the truth of what caused Cyre's destruction. The question of who or what created the Mournland—answered at last."

Do you know what happened in Cyre on the Day of Mourning? "No. Valorek's spellbook is written in an arcane language of his own devising. I wasn't able to translate any of it, but I'm sure others can crack the code."



Conclusion

Award XP for this event's roleplaying according to how well the characters engaged Kelani, and how successful they were at obtaining the clues and information available.

When they have finished talking to Kelani, the adventurers can take their leave of the embassy. In accordance with Kelani's belief that Saidan Boromar was behind her murder, their next move is most likely to arrange an audience with the criminal head of the Boromar Clan.

Event 5: Rumble at the Lucky Lady

Roleplaying Encounter (750 XP) and Combat Encounter (Level Variable)

The Boromar Clan is the most powerful criminal organization in Sharn—a halfling family that controls a network of smugglers, gambling halls, fences, thieves, and extortionists through all levels of the city. More than just a criminal gang, the clan also controls legitimate businesses, and even has players on the political scene.

Saidan Boromar is the fast-talking, faster-striking head of the clan. One of the most influential figures in Sharn, he is the individual that Kelani believes was behind her murder.

Obtaining a meeting with Saidan Boromar normally requires great connections and an even greater amount of cash. In this case, the adventurers can take advantage of the authority granted to them by the Lord Commander of the Sharn Watch to meet with Saidan at the Lucky Lady, his club in Middle Menthis Plateau.

ORDER OF EVENTS

If the characters seek out the Boromar Clan before Kelani is raised (most likely because the clan is the best source of information on illegal activity in Sharn), adjust the setup of this event as needed. Consider having Saidan Boromar already aware of rumors that his warforged enforcers are secretly working for another member of the Aurum. Then when the adventurers arrive to make inquiries about Kelani's murder, he and they can put two and two together.

Alternatively, when the warforged realize that the characters are investigating Kelani's death, they might panic and attack regardless of what the adventurers or Saidan know. In the aftermath of battle, information gleaned from interrogating the warforged (or clues on their bodies) can lead the characters to Kelani's residence (event 2) or the Karrnath embassy (event 3).

The Lucky Lady

The Lucky Lady is a raucous tavern whose upscale appearance belies the great danger within.

5A. Entrance: A long flight of stairs through shops and predominantly halfling residences winds up to the club.

Six halfling guards at the doors of the Lucky Lady watch as you approach. Their leader takes you in with a dismissive glance. "For the privilege of drinking in the Lucky Lady, twenty-five gold per person. Or perhaps you took a wrong turn, friends?"

The characters can pay the cover and enter freely, or can avoid the expense with a DC 16 Diplomacy check or Intimidate check and the presentation of their Sharn Watch credentials. If they decide not to pay, the guards alert the enforcers inside, giving the warforged an advantage when combat begins.

5B. Seating Area: The clientele of the Lucky Lady includes some of Sharn's most notable criminals, merchants, politicians, and entertainment figures. The place is packed at all hours of the day, creating a haze of noise and activity that imposes a –2 penalty on Perception checks. All seating areas are difficult terrain.

The second-floor seating area has a balcony that overlooks the bar. A creature that falls from the second level takes 1d10 damage.

The characters catch their first sight of Saidan Boromar's warforged enforcers here. See "Warforged Watching."

5C. Bar: Racks of bottles and glasses are dangerous for anyone smashing into them. A creature subject to forced movement in the area of the bar takes 1d6 damage from broken glass and makes the area of its movement difficult terrain.

5D. Stage: This small stage stands 3 feet above the floor. It costs 1 extra square of movement to climb onto the stage.

5E. Balcony: A private balcony overlooks the city and offers a dangerous escape route through its single window. With a DC 24 Athletics check, a character can jump from the balcony to a skybridge 20 feet below, taking 1d10 damage in the process. A failed check means a deadly fall, at the DM's discretion.

5F. Meeting Room: This private space is reserved for members of the Boromar family on clan business. Saidan Boromar and his nephew, Vink, are here. See "Private Meeting."

Warforged Watching

Inside the Lucky Lady, the adventurers have ample opportunity to assess the warforged enforcers responsible for Kelani's death.

As the characters enter the club, read:
Two halflings behind the bar keep a steady flow of drinks going to a half-dozen servers working the floor. For all its high-class reputation, the Lucky Lady is no less boisterous than any other Sharn speakeasy. Only the cut of the clothing and the weapons on display here hint at the wealth of the tavern's patrons.

Three warforged guards wander among the crowded tables. The servers give them a wide berth, as they do the claw-foot dinosaurs that follow the warforged around like pets.

Insight (DC 12): There seems to be no love lost between the servers and the warforged enforcers, who stomp about as if they own the place.

No immediate clues connect the three warforged to Kelani's murder, but the adventurers can get useful information from any of the servers with a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check, and a suitable amount of coin.

DC 16 plus 10 gp: The serving staff hates the warforged enforcers, who act as the tavern's managers as well as its security force. "We work for bare wages and tips, while they prance about flashing gems and coin like they're Saidan himself."

DC 24 plus 20 gp, if a character asks about the jewelry missing from Kelani's body: "Only jewelry I've seen is the rings and pendant one of the enforcers was carrying earlier today. Paid for drinks for the house with them."

The jewelry is now in the care of one of the bartenders, who has no qualms about turning it over to the characters in the aftermath of combat (see "Treasure," page 4). The pendant hangs from broken clasps that match the chain found beneath Lady Kelani's corpse (see event 1).

DC 24 plus 20 gp, if a character asks about Saidan's whereabouts: Any server or bartender can confirm Saidan Boromar's presence in the Lucky Lady.

"Lord Boromar is here. He's conducting meetings all this week, but unless you're invited to one, I'd think twice about interrupting."

Saidan and Vink Boromar

Fight First, Talk Later

If the characters decide to question the warforged enforcers first (or if they attack at once), a battle breaks out before they have a chance to meet with Saidan Boromar. In that case, Vink Boromar joins the fray, and all the combatants try to kill the characters. (The warforged plan to give Saidan a trumped-up story about the characters making threats against his family.)

If the adventurers survive such a fight, Saidan Boromar angrily offers to let them walk away from the Lucky Lady, even as he plans retribution later. If no warforged have survived for interrogation, it takes a DC 24 Diplomacy check for Saidan to even consider listening to the characters' story.

Private Meeting

Upstairs, four halflings stand guard outside Saidan's private meeting room. One is Vink Boromar, who advances toward visitors with a half-drawn short sword to dissuade them from approaching.

When Vink steps forward, read:

"Vink Boromar, at your service. Afraid we've closed off this part of the club for a private meeting. Best you move along."

If the characters present their Sharn Watch credentials and request to speak to Saidan, the surly Vink slips inside for a moment, then returns.

"My uncle will see you now."

Vink Boromar	**Level 7 Brute**
Small natural humanoid, halfling	XP 300
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48	**Initiative** +7
AC 19, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 16	**Perception** +3
Speed 6	
Traits	
Nimble Reaction	
Vink gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Psychotic Break	
While bloodied, Vink takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and deals 2d6 extra damage.	
Standard Actions	
Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 8 damage.	
Savage Attack (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 14 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Second Chance ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: An enemy hits Vink with an attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The triggering enemy rerolls the attack roll and must use the second result.	
Skills Endurance +11, Stealth +12, Thievery +12	
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+3)	
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 9 (+2)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, *sending stone*	

Vink Boromar is a murderous thug. The protection afforded by his uncle has convinced him that he can kill with impunity, and growing up as a spoiled child has kept him from having to deal with the consequences of his acts. Not a creature of great ambition or imagination, Vink does what his uncle tells him to do, which seldom amounts to more than stabbing people to death and the odd bit of grunt work.

While on a mission, Vink carries a *sending stone* that he uses to receive instructions from his uncle.

The Crime Lord

Saidan Boromar bought his way into the Aurum and, through his connections, attained membership in

the Gold Concord. He tries to keep an eye on other known members of the Aurum, but Saidan has many activities competing for his attention. As a rule, he tries not to involve himself in the affairs of other Aurum members unless their activities directly oppose his own initiatives.

Saidan has such powerful connections that killing him is certain to offend more than a few people, including his wife Mala Boromar d'Jorasco, an unmarked heir of House Jorasco, and their scheming eldest daughter, Councilor Ilyra Boromar of Sharn. If Saidan dies, Ilyra is the member of the family most likely to step up and replace him.

When the characters enter area 5F, read:

Saidan Boromar sits alone at a huge oak table as the doors close behind you. Half-hidden behind his chair is a clawfoot dinosaur fitted with a saddle and bridle. A dozen halfling guards stand around the room, hands on their daggers as they watch you darkly.

"Always happy to speak with members of the Sharn Watch," Saidan says with a grin, "but equally happy to keep the conversation short. What do you want?"

Saidan has no patience for anything but getting to the point, so the adventurers have nothing to lose by being blunt. Use the following material as guidelines for both his responses and the characters' ability to read between the lines.

What do you know about the murder of Kelani Thauram? "The actress? Dead? That's a crime and a half. But why should I know anything about it?"

Insight (DC 16): Boromar is clearly a practiced liar, but his surprise at hearing of the murder seems genuine.

Kelani was here a month ago. Did you have some kind of trouble with her? "Lady Kelani performed in my club, sure. Anyone would be a fool to want to silence that angel's voice. If I had a grudge against anyone with her reputation, I promise you'd never hear about it."

Witnesses saw three of your warforged enforcers at the scene. "Not a chance of that. Anyone who works for me knows that I'm the only one they work for. Ask them yourself."

Saidan Boromar **Level 8 Elite Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid, halfling XP 700

HP 174; **Bloodied** 87 **Initiative** +11
AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19 **Perception** +11
Speed 6
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Clawfoot Rider
While mounted on a clawfoot, Saidan gains combat advantage against enemies that are not mounted.

Nimble Reaction
Saidan gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 6 damage.
Miss: Half damage if Saidan has combat advantage against the target.

Double Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Saidan uses *short sword* twice and can shift up to 3 squares before each attack.

Triggered Actions

Evasive Enemy ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: Saidan starts his turn immobilized, restrained, or slowed.
Effect (Free Action): Saidan can make a saving throw against one of the triggering conditions. On a save, the triggering condition ends immediately.

Second Chance ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: An enemy hits Saidan with an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The triggering enemy rerolls the attack roll and must use the second result.

Skills Diplomacy +12, Insight +11, Intimidate +12, Stealth +14, Streetwise +12, Thievery +14
Str 11 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 14 (+6) **Cha** 17 (+7)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, short sword, *sending stone*

Magebred Clawfoot **Level 6 Skirmisher**
Medium natural beast (mount, reptile) XP 250

HP 70; Bloodied 35 **Initiative** +9
AC 20, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 15 **Perception** +8
Speed 7

Traits

Medium Steed
A Medium creature can ride a clawfoot.

Clawfoot Charge (mount)
When a clawfoot's rider charges, both the clawfoot and the rider can make a melee basic attack.

Standard Actions

Talons ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage.

Feinting Swipe ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Effect: The clawfoot can shift 1 square and makes the following attack.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Skills Athletics +12, Endurance +10, Stealth +12
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+3)
Con 14 (+5) **Int** 5 (+0) **Cha** 6 (+1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

12+ Boromar Clan Cutthroats	Level 6 Minion Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid, halfling	XP 63 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +9
AC 20, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17	**Perception** +9
Speed 6	
Traits	
Nimble Reaction	
The cutthroat gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 damage, or 9 if the cutthroat has combat advantage against the target.	
Mobile Melee Attack ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The cutthroat can shift up to 3 squares and use *short sword* at any point during that movement.	
Skills Stealth +12, Streetwise +8, Thievery +12	
Str 11 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)	
Con 14 (+5) **Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+3)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment leather armor, short sword	

Tactics: Saidan isn't spoiling for a fight, but he doesn't back down from one either. The characters' Sharn Watch badges won't protect them from the crime lord's wrath if they provoke him.

Saidan leaps onto the back of his magebred clawfoot and relies on his *clawfoot rider* trait to gain combat advantage against unmounted enemies. While mounted, he cannot shift between strikes when using *double attack*.

Vink Boromar, the magebred clawfoot, and the halfling cutthroats fight to the death to protect the crime lord. As the cutthroats fall in battle, more arrive each round until the entire crew (twenty-four in all) shows up.

Warforged Brawl

If he reaches an accord with the characters, Saidan ushers them outside and calls the closest of the warforged enforcers over. Its clawfoot pet follows along. Whatever approach the adventurers take with the questioning, the enforcer attacks as soon as it realizes that they have connected it with the murder.

In response to your questions, the warforged simply howls, and that sound silences all conversation in the crowded bar. The enforcer pulls free the greataxe strapped to its back and attacks.

The other two warforged enforcers and their clawfoot pets are on the floor below. They recognize their companion's battle cry and appear at the top of the stairs at the end of the first round.

The enforcers aren't alone. Eight disguised House Tarkanan killers are in the tavern, mingling among the patrons. On the third round of combat, they enter the fray.

Tactics: If the adventurers presented their Sharn Watch credentials to the guards at the front door, the warforged are alerted, gaining a +4 bonus to their initiative checks.

The warforged are unsophisticated fighters, but they flank when possible. They stay in the thick of the crowd, sacrificing mobility in the hope of hindering the adventurers' area attacks. At the end of each warforged enforcer's turn, roll 1d6 – 2 to determine how many panicked patrons are adjacent to the warforged.

The House Tarkanan killers flank to gain combat advantage. They would rather die than submit to capture and interrogation.

Vink Boromar, always looking for an excuse to kill something, immediately enters the fray on the adventurers' side. He flanks to gain combat advantage but does not engage in other combined tactics.

Saidan Boromar and his personal guards help to keep the crowd away from combat but are content to let the adventurers finish the warforged themselves.

3 Warforged Enforcers	Level 7 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (living construct)	XP 300 each
HP 100; **Bloodied** 50	**Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17	**Perception** +9
Speed 5	
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Greataxe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 6 damage.	
⊹ **Reaping Strike** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d12 + 9 damage.	
Minor Actions	
Warforged Resolve (healing) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: The warforged gains 6 temporary hit points and can make a saving throw against an ongoing damage effect. If it uses this power while bloodied, it also regains 6 hit points.	
Skills Athletics +14, Endurance +13, Intimidate +8	
Str 22 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+4)	
Con 20 (+8) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment greataxe	

8 Tarkanan Killers	Level 7 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 damage, or 9 if the killer has combat advantage against the target.	
Minor Actions	
⊹ **Khyber's Grasp** (psychic) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The killer drops to 0 hit points.	
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +10 vs. Will	
Hit: 5 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +12, Streetwise +8, Thievery +12	
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+4)	
Con 12 (+4) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+3)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment leather armor, 5 daggers	

Questioning the Warforged

In the aftermath of combat, Saidan Boromar orders the Lucky Lady closed and sits down to deal with the adventurers and any captured enemies.

"I've got no qualms about taking care of someone who needs taking care of. But assassination is not the Boromar way." Saidan gives his grinning nephew Vink a sidelong glance. "You solve this murder, you'll clear my name while you're at it. Do that, and you've got the resources of the Boromar Clan at your disposal."

The adventurers must question the warforged to unravel the last clues regarding Lady Kelani's murder. If they fail to take any warforged prisoners, Saidan Boromar obtains the information from contacts across Sharn during the following day. (In that case, reduce the roleplaying XP for this encounter.)

The warforged do not deny that they murdered Kelani, even taking dark pride in the fear she displayed before the end. These self-serving constructs are wholly prepared to sell out Drago for their own freedom. When the characters question the warforged, use the following material as guidelines for their responses.

Why did you kill Kelani? "Her ambition got the better of her. Her plans to gain a seat on the Aurum's Gold Concord made an enemy of Drago Daarn. He's the one who ordered the hit, but it was the spellbook he had his eye on. He sent us to her rooms to get the truth out of her. We didn't find her at home, but we brought back a little gold statue to Drago to prove we had been there."

Streetwise (DC 12): Drago Daarn is an ambitious dwarf whose reputation is known to anyone with dealings in Sharn's underworld. Although gifted with an aristocratic upbringing, powerful friends, and a House Kundarak dragonmark, he bought his way into the Aurum's Silver Concord with blood.

Streetwise (DC 16): Drago grew up in the Cogs of Sharn. He was the only child of two dwarf exiles forced to flee the Mror Holds for selling iron ore on the black market during the Last War. Rumor holds that Drago murdered his parents for their wealth even before he came of age, thereby developing a taste for the blood money with which he bought his way into the Aurum.

Streetwise (DC 24): Some say that Drago is a gifted wizard who learned his craft from stolen spellbooks. It seems likely that he knows the worth of Krystival Valorek's spellbook, and that such a relic is too dangerous to keep for long.

Where's the award (the golden statuette) you stole from Kelani's tower? "Drago's warforged bodyguard, Aurax, has it. He likes gold."

What does Drago want with the spellbook? "Same as the actress—he's going to use it to gain admission to the Gold Concord. Beyond that, Drago's got blackmail on his mind. He knows how much Aundair wants the spellbook kept under wraps, and he plans to make Queen Aurala pay to get it back."

Where is Drago now? "Drago ain't one to leave himself at the mercy of the Royal Eyes once the deal's done. He's got an old friend at his back—Thora Tarkanan."

Streetwise (DC 12): Thora Tarkanan is the founder of the House Tarkanan thieves and assassins guild, and is still its public face. Born Thora Tavin, this sly rogue took the surname Tarkanan when she became leader of the aberrant dragonmarked house.

Streetwise (DC 16): Thora relinquished her control of House Tarkanan to a more powerful leader—a dragonmarked human known only as the Son of Khyber. While the Son of Khyber lures aberrant creatures to House Tarkanan and plots to destroy the dragonmarked houses of Khorvaire, Thora hires assassins and uses them to dispatch her lord's more troublesome enemies.

What is Drago's plan? "Drago's holed up in a Tarkanan refuge under the city. Got a meeting set with some Aundairian ambassador. That's where the spellbook's set to be sold."

The warforged don't know the location of the meeting place, but Saidan Boromar can use his connections to find out. The time remaining before the meeting allows the adventurers to take an extended rest prior to the final showdown.

Questioning the Killers

If any of the Tarkanan killers survive, they prove uncooperative and fearless in the face of death or torture. Only magical domination can compel them to divulge the location of the House Tarkanan refuge—but a curse placed upon them by the Son of Khyber causes a House Tarkanan killer to drop dead the instant that information is communicated, triggering the killer's *Khyber's grasp* power.

ORDER OF EVENTS

If this event takes place early in the adventure, Vink Boromar tags along for any subsequent encounters prior to Event 6: The Silver Concordian. Use the homicidal halfling's presence to liven up the encounters at Kelani's residence (event 2) and in the Karrnath embassy (events 3 and 4), as appropriate.

Conclusion

Award XP for this event's roleplaying according to how well the characters engaged the NPCs, and how successful they were at obtaining the clues and information available.

As a condition for aiding the adventurers, Saidan Boromar offers the services of his psychotic nephew, Vink Boromar, a self-styled master thief. Any Insight check made against Saidan suggests that he plans for Vink to watch the heroes as much as aid them. The elimination of Drago Daarn can only work to Saidan's advantage in the end.

Event 6: The Silver Concordian

The heroes must infiltrate the House Tarkanan refuge deep inside Sharn's grimy underworld and confront the villainous Drago Daarn. Even as they deal with the duplicitous dwarf and his allies, agents of Aundair, Karrnath, and Breland wait to swoop in and claim Krystival Valorek's spellbook for themselves.

House Tarkanan Refuge

Tucked away in the depths below Sharn, this ruined complex is home not only to murderers in House Tarkanan's employ, but also to a host of aberrant monsters lured into House Tarkanan's service.

Unless noted otherwise, all areas of the House Tarkanan refuge have the following common features.

Light: Except in the final encounter areas, the refuge is dark. The inhabitants either travel with torches or possess darkvision.

Ceilings: The rough stone ceilings are 10 to 15 feet high in passages and smaller chambers.

Doors: The ancient doors of the refuge are battered and difficult to open (Athletics DC 16).

Lava: Vents of lava pool up from the furnaces of the Cogs below the refuge. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in lava takes 2d10 fire damage. A creature takes this damage only once per turn.

Tracks: The monsters that roam the refuge leave a confused mess of tracks in all areas (but see area 6A).

Only four areas of the refuge are keyed (areas 6A–6D). As the adventurers explore the rest of the complex, use tables 1 and 2 as directed to generate random contents and monsters in unkeyed areas. Roll up to three times for contents and once for monsters in each area.

Drago's Last Stand

Drago Daarn sits at the center of numerous plots that connect through Lady Kelani's murder. The information the characters learned from the warforged enforcers in the Lucky Lady puts them in a position to interrupt Drago's endgame—using his connections to House Tarkanan for protection while he arranges the sale of Krystival Valorek's lost spellbook to the Aundairian ambassador, Helais ir'Lantar.

ORDER OF EVENTS

This event includes the climactic battle of the adventure and should be played only after the previous events have led the adventurers here.

Before confronting Drago Daarn, the characters might try making contact with Ambassador Helais ir'Lantar of Aundair. He is not at the Aundairian embassy, however, and no one is certain of his present whereabouts. The characters will not have his diplomatic immunity to cower behind!

6A. Open Hall

Exploration Encounter

The central space of the refuge is empty except for rubble, offal, and eerie echoes. While the adventurers are moving in the open hall, roll for contents on Table 1 but do not roll for monsters.

A DC 24 Perception check discerns recent tracks made by a large group (consisting of Drago, Aurax, two warforged enforcers, and six House Tarkanan killers). Two follow-up DC 16 Perception checks allow the characters to follow the unknown party's route to area 6B.

The adventurers' focus in the refuge should be infiltration and discovery, not room-to-room dungeon crawling. They are free to avoid randomly rolled combat encounters if they like, though grell ambushes should be an exception. The wandering monsters in the refuge should present a fairly easy challenge. If the characters choose to fight at every opportunity, however, their inability to take an extended rest in the refuge might deplete their resources before the final encounters.

6 Tarkanan Killers	Level 7 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 damage, or 9 if the killer has combat advantage against the target.	
Minor Actions	
✧ **Khyber's Grasp** (psychic) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The killer drops to 0 hit points.	
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +10 vs. Will	
Hit: 5 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +12, Streetwise +8, Thievery +12	
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+4)	
Con 12 (+4) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+3)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment leather armor, 5 daggers	

Grick Creepling	Level 7 Skirmisher
Medium aberrant beast	XP 300
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40	**Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18	**Perception** +10
Speed 6, climb 4	Darkvision
Traits	
Expert Flanker	
The grick deals 1d6 extra damage against an enemy it is flanking.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Tentacle Rake** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)	
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 7 (+1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

TABLE 1: CONTENTS

d10	Area Contents (roll up to three times)
1	Rubble and debris. Sections of the area are difficult terrain.
2	Fetid water, dripping or pooled. Sections of the area are difficult terrain.
3	Gnawed bones.
4	Fresh body parts. They could be the remains of humanoids, animals, or monsters.
5	Den or nest. A DC 12 Perception check turns up 2d20 gp worth of flawed gems or coins.
6	Broken weapons. Creatures that fall prone in the area take 1d6 damage.
7	Offal and filth. Non-aberrant creatures in the area are weakened (save ends).
8	Caustic slime. Creatures in the area are slowed (save ends). Any creature that starts its turn in the slime takes 5 acid damage.
9	Aberrant dragonmark sigil (nonmagical) on a wall or section of floor.
10	Aberrant dragonmark sigil (as above, except treat as a necrotic glyph of warding).

TABLE 2: MONSTERS

d10	Monsters (roll once)
1-6	None
7	6 Tarkanan killers, 2 dolgaunt lunatics (level 5 encounter; 1,150 XP)
8	4 grick creeplings (level 5 encounter; 1,200 XP)
9	2 grell rift renders (Perception DC 25 to spot) (level 6 encounter; 1,400 XP)
10	1 grell rift render, 2 dolgaunt lunatics (level 6 encounter; 1,400 XP)

Dolgaunt Lunatic	Level 8 Soldier
Medium aberrant humanoid (blind)	XP 350
HP 85; **Bloodied** 42	**Initiative** +11
AC 24, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 18	**Perception** +5
Speed 6	Blindsight 10
Immune blinded, gaze	

Standard Actions

⊕ Grasping Tentacle ✦ At-Will

Requirement: The lunatic must not be grabbing more than one creature.

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 16).

⊕ Rending Claws ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage, or 4d6 + 9 if the target is grabbed by the lunatic.

Move Actions

Drag ✦ At-Will

Effect: The lunatic moves up to half its speed and pulls each creature it is grabbing into the nearest unoccupied space adjacent to it.

Str 17 (+7)	**Dex** 20 (+9)	**Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 13 (+5)	**Int** 9 (+3)	**Cha** 9 (+3)
Alignment evil	**Languages** Deep Speech, Goblin	

6B. Guard Post

Combat Encounter Level 8 (2,050 XP)

Drago's allies in House Tarkanan have the center of the refuge locked down, expecting that Helais ir'Lantar will employ treachery to avoid Drago's extortion and steal back the spellbook.

As the characters approach this area, read:

Acrid smoke hangs in the air, and a pool of bubbling lava flanks a narrow, crumbling passageway where twelve warriors in the livery of House Tarkanan stand guard.

A direct attack is entirely appropriate against the Tarkanan forces. These warriors initially assume that the heroes are emissaries of Helais ir'Lantar, so they do not attack immediately. The characters can make use of subterfuge to get into an advantageous position.

Grell Rift Render	Level 8 Elite Skirmisher
Medium aberrant magical beast (blind)	XP 700
HP 172; **Bloodied** 86	**Initiative** +10
AC 22, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 19	**Perception** +10
Speed 1 (clumsy), fly 6 (hover)	**Blindsight** 10
Immune blinded, gaze	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	

Traits

Meat Shield

The rift render gains a +2 bonus to AC while it has an enemy grabbed.

Standard Actions

⊕ Grasping Tentacles ✦ At-Will

Requirement: The rift render must not be grabbing a creature.

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 24). Until the target escapes the grab, it takes ongoing 5 damage.

Move Actions

Spatial Rift (teleportation) **✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞

Effect: The rift render teleports up to 5 squares. Any creatures grabbed by the rift render teleport with it, appearing in an unoccupied space adjacent to the rift render. This movement does not end the grab.

Minor Actions

Bite (poison) **✦ At-Will** (1/round)

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the rift render); +13 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends). The effect also ends if the rift render is no longer grabbing the target.

Skills Stealth +13		
Str 15 (+6)	**Dex** 19 (+8)	**Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 14 (+6)	**Int** 11 (+4)	**Cha** 9 (+3)
Alignment evil	**Languages** Deep Speech	

If the characters enter without attacking, read:

A second pool of lava hisses and bubbles in this crumbling chamber. More guards stand before a flight of stairs rising to a broad ledge and a set of double doors beyond. Two destrachans crouch at the end of each ledge, scanning the room sightlessly as a well-dressed dwarf struts down the stairs.

"Well met," he says. "I am Drago Daarn. I trust that your master is close behind. Or does Helais underestimate the chaos that will ensue if all Khorvaire learns of the secrets that Krystival Valorek's spellbook holds?"

This is not Drago, but the changeling Simile, one of House Tarkanan's finest assassins. Thora Tarkanan has instructed her to assume the form of Drago Daarn to deal with Ambassador Helais ir'Lantar while the real Drago remains out of sight.

If the characters have missed any of the essential information revealed in previous events, Simile can fill in the details. She grows increasingly wary the longer the characters question her, and eventually orders her forces to attack.

Wall and Ledge: A 10-foot-high wall fronts a broad ledge whose alcoves hold statues of creatures with aberrant dragonmarks. Stairs rise up to the ledge, which can also be climbed (Athletics DC 12). A creature on the ledge has partial cover against creatures on the floor.

Statue: The statues depict members of some old and forgotten noble house that fell on hard times long before the Last War. A character can pull a statue over with a DC 16 Athletics check, creating difficult terrain in 2 squares adjacent to it (character's choice).

Rubble: Areas of rock and rubble are difficult terrain.

Tactics: Simile uses *shapeshifter feint* and flanks whenever possible to gain combat advantage, focusing on lightly armored characters. She does nothing to reveal her true identity, but a character in combat with her can note the subterfuge more easily than someone just observing her.

Insight (DC 16): Drago battles ferociously, but his combat style seems inconsistent with his build and his wizardly reputation. This is no dwarf wizard you're fighting.

Simile's highest priority is to warn Drago and Thora Tarkanan of foes she cannot take care of. She saves *cloud mind* until she is first bloodied, then uses this power to help her fall back from combat. She runs through the unlocked double doors to escape. (The XP award for this encounter provides only 200 XP for Simile, assuming she flees. If the characters kill her, award full XP for her instead.)

The Tarkanan killers fight in pairs to flank for combat advantage. They do everything they can to block the stairs, especially once Simile makes her escape.

The destrachans stay atop the ledge as long as possible, gaining partial cover while they pound the adventurers with *sound pulse* and *bellowing blast*.

Development: The adventurers can flee this combat at any time by moving up the stairs and through the unlocked double doors. Any surviving creatures give chase.

12 Tarkanan Killers **Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Standard Actions

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage, or 9 if the killer has combat advantage against the target.

Minor Actions

Khyber's Grasp (psychic) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The killer drops to 0 hit points.
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +10 vs. Will
Hit: 5 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Skills Stealth +12, Streetwise +8, Thievery +12
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 12 (+4) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, 5 daggers

Simile **Level 8 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid, changeling (shapechanger) XP 350

HP 69; **Bloodied** 34 **Initiative** +13
AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21 **Perception** +10
Speed 6

Traits

Combat Advantage
Simile deals 2d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to her.

Standard Actions

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 3d4 + 9 damage.

Cloud Mind (charm) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 5 (one enemy in the burst); +11 vs. Will
Hit: Simile is invisible to the target until she attacks or is hit by an attack.

Minor Actions

Changeling Disguise (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Simile alters her physical form to appear as a Medium humanoid until she uses this power again. She retains her statistics in her new form, and her clothing and gear do not change. To assume a specific individual's form, Simile must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 29 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

Shapeshifter Feint ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target grants combat advantage to Simile until the end of Simile's next turn.

Skills Bluff +13, Insight +10, Stealth +14
Str 12 (+5) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 13 (+5) **Cha** 19 (+8)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment dagger

2 Destrachans **Level 9 Artillery**
Large aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 400 each

HP 80; **Bloodied** 40 **Initiative** +8
AC 22, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20 **Perception** +11
Speed 6, climb 3 Blindsight 10
Immune blinded, gaze; **Resist** 10 thunder

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage.

Sound Pulse (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 10 thunder damage.

Bellowing Blast (thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 5 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Skills Bluff +9, Stealth +13
Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+4)
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech

6C. Throne Room

Combat Encounter Level 9 (2,050 XP)

This former great hall now serves the Son of Khyber as a throne room when he's at the refuge. Thora Tarkanan waits here for "Drago" and Helais ir'Lantar. When they arrive, she has orders to bring the spellbook out from the shrine chamber, where Drago remains in hiding.

When the doors to this area open, read:
A dozen House Tarkanan guards stand behind the pillars lining this huge chamber. A masked woman in leather armor stands before a stone throne at the far end. The woman draws a longsword as she shouts, "Warriors of Tarkanan, kill them all!"

If Simile escaped the previous encounter, adjust the read-aloud text accordingly to place the false Drago

by Thora Tarkanan's side. Thora orders an attack the moment she sees that Helais ir'Lantar is not with the characters at the door.

Light: Bright light from torches along the walls.

Ceiling: 20 feet high.

Dais: Two magical daises stand in the far corners of the chamber, each holding a statue depicting the Son of Khyber. Any creature not possessing an aberrant dragonmark that ends its turn adjacent to a dais takes 1d8 psychic damage. Members of House Tarkanan are immune to this effect.

Pillars: These cracked and crumbling pillars provide superior cover.

Throne: The Son of Khyber's aberrant aura has warped this once magnificent and regal stone throne. Anyone other than a member of House Tarkanan who either sits or stands on the throne takes 4d8 psychic damage. The throne provides at least partial cover, and it takes a move action and a DC 16 Athletics check to clamber over it.

Tactics: In the first round of combat, and once she is bloodied, Thora Tarkanan moves within 6 squares of a lightly armored target, then uses *tear through space* to attack twice with combat advantage. She flanks with the Tarkanan killers at other times to gain combat advantage.

Between the last encounter and this one, Simile has consumed an elixir that restores her hit points and her *cloud mind* power. She fights furiously, flanking with the Tarkanan killers to maintain combat advantage even when her *shapeshifter feint* fails.

The Tarkanan killers take their lead from Thora and Simile, spreading out to avoid area attacks but fighting in pairs.

Conclusion

Thora and her followers fight to the death. The sound of combat in this area alerts Drago and his warforged guards in the shrine chamber, who prepare an ambush for the adventurers. See area 6D.

Thora Tarakanan and Simile

Thora Tarkanan	**Level 9 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 800
HP 188; **Bloodied** 94	**Initiative** +11
AC 23, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22	**Perception** +12
Speed 6	Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
Combat Advantage	
Thora deals 2d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to her.	
Aberrant Dragonmark	
Whenever Thora starts her turn dazed, immobilized, slowed, stunned, or weakened, she can choose to take 10 damage and end one of those conditions.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage.	
⊹ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: Thora uses *longsword* twice.	
⊹ **Tear through Space** (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Effect: Thora teleports up to 6 squares and uses *longsword* twice. Each enemy adjacent to her destination square grants combat advantage to her for this attack.	
Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, History +12, Insight +12, Stealth +14, Streetwise +13	
Str 13 (+5) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+7)	
Con 14 (+6) **Int** 17 (+7) **Cha** 19 (+8)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, longsword	

Simile **Level 8 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid, changeling (shapechanger) XP 350

HP 69; **Bloodied** 34 **Initiative** +13
AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21 **Perception** +10
Speed 6

Traits

Combat Advantage
Simile deals 2d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to her.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 3d4 + 9 damage.

✧ **Cloud Mind** (charm) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 5 (one enemy in the burst); +11 vs. Will
Hit: Simile is invisible to the target until she attacks or is hit by an attack.

Minor Actions

Changeling Disguise (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Simile alters her physical form to appear as a Medium humanoid until she uses this power again. She retains her statistics in her new form, and her clothing and gear do not change. To assume a specific individual's form, Simile must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 29 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

⸸ **Shapeshifter Feint** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target grants combat advantage to Simile until the end of Simile's next turn.

Skills Bluff +13, Insight +10, Stealth +14
Str 12 (+5) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 13 (+5) **Cha** 19 (+8)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment dagger

12 Tarkanan Killers **Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Standard Actions

⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage, or 9 if the killer has combat advantage against the target.

Minor Actions

✧ **Khyber's Grasp** (psychic) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The killer drops to 0 hit points.
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +10 vs. Will
Hit: 5 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Skills Stealth +12, Streetwise +8, Thievery +12
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 12 (+4) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, 5 daggers

6D. Shrine Chamber

Combat Encounter Level 8 (1,800 XP)

Even when backed into a corner, Drago Daarn has no intention of offering the adventurers an easy fight.

Stone Doors: The enormous sliding stone doors between the throne room and the shrine chamber can be opened or closed with a DC 24 Athletics check.

Secret Doors: It takes a DC 24 Perception check to detect a secret door, and a minor action to open it.

Alcoves: The alcoves behind the secret doors hold dried and useless alchemical reagents. Two warforged enforcers hide here when the adventurers enter (see "Tactics").

Aberrant Altar: An altar of pockmarked black steel stands behind a locked door (Thievery DC 24 to open). Any bloodied evil or aberrant creature that ends its turn adjacent to the altar gains a +2 bonus to its next attack roll. A creature can gain this benefit only once per encounter.

At the start of the encounter, Drago Daarn and Aurax hide in the altar chamber (see "Tactics"). It takes a minor action to unlock the door from the inside.

Statues: Six statues of aberrant dragonmarked heroes stand around the shrine chamber. A character can pull a statue over with a DC 16 Athletics check, creating difficult terrain in 2 squares adjacent to it (character's choice).

Treasure: Although the adventurers won't be able to obtain it until after event 7 (and might be forced to leave it behind depending on the outcome of that event), they can remove Aurax's gold plating after its death and sell it. See "Treasure," page 4.

The spellbook of Krystival Valorek sits in the altar chamber, next to a 9-inch-tall gold statuette of a tower (the award that Drago's warforged stole from Kelani Thauram's rooms). You can set a value for the gold statuette, in case the adventurers decide to sell it. Alternatively, Kelani might pay a reward for its safe return.

Running the Battle

Drago and the warforged try to hold combat to the smaller confines of the shrine chamber, hindering their foes and making the best use of their multiple-target and close attack powers. If the adventurers fall back to the throne room (area 6C), the villains pursue. In that event, treat areas 6C and 6D as a combined battlefield.

Tactics: Drago and his warforged prepare an ambush for the adventurers. The warforged enforcers hide in the secret alcoves, while Drago and Aurax hide in the altar chamber.

These foes time their appearance to the opening of the huge shrine doors (whose grinding they can hear) and to the sounds of combat in area 6C. If the adventurers discover the villains' hiding places first, adjust these tactics as necessary.

Round 3 (after the doors open): The north warforged enforcer emerges and attacks the closest adventurer. The warforged attempts to force or draw characters to the east, toward the locked door leading to the aberrant shrine.

Round 4: The south enforcer emerges with the same tactics. If they have adventurers pinned in the east side of the chamber, the warforged stand to block the narrow spaces next to the secret doors, trying to keep the characters from moving past them. Both use *reaping strike* against as many targets as possible.

Round 5: Aurax emerges from the altar chamber, shutting the door behind it. (Drago then locks the door as a minor action.) The gold-plated warforged takes advantage of the close quarters to lay into foes with *double attack*.

Round 6: Drago Daarn emerges from the altar chamber, staying back from his foes as he uses *necroflame pillar*. He sustains the pillar round after round, and he can even use it for defense by standing in the middle of it. He uses *ice ray* against characters who slip past the warforged, or to target ranged combatants if the combat spills back into area 6C.

When first bloodied, Drago drinks his *potion of vitality* to regain 25 hit points. (The potion also allows him to make one saving throw against an effect that a save can end.) Drago flees or surrenders when he becomes bloodied a second time. At that point, he surrenders the spellbook if he thinks it might save his life.

Aurax has struck up a genuine friendship with Drago and guards the dwarf with his life.

Aurax and Drago Daarn

Drago Daarn	**Level 9 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	XP 400
HP 79; **Bloodied** 39	**Initiative** +4
AC 23, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21	**Perception** +6
Speed 5	Low-light vision

Traits

Stand the Ground

Drago can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide. In addition, he can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.

Standard Actions

Handaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 10 damage.

Ice Ray (cold) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10 + 7 cold damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 cold damage (save ends both).

Necroflame Pillar (fire, necrotic, zone) ✦ **Encounter**

Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +14 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + 10 fire and necrotic damage.

Effect: The burst creates a 20-foot-high zone of black flame that deals 5 fire and necrotic damage to any enemy that ends its turn there. The zone lasts until the end of Drago's next turn.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of Drago's next turn, and he can move the zone up to 3 squares as a move action.

Triggered Actions

Shield ✦ **Encounter**

Trigger: Drago is hit by an attack.

Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Drago gains a +4 power bonus to AC and Reflex until the end of his next turn.

Skills Arcana +12, Dungeoneering +12, Streetwise +12

Str 14 (+6)	**Dex** 11 (+4)	**Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 19 (+8)	**Int** 17 (+7)	**Cha** 16 (+7)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Dwarven

Equipment robes, handaxe, spellbook, *potion of vitality*

Aurax the Warforged **Level 9 Elite Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (living construct) XP 800

HP 200; **Bloodied** 100 **Initiative** +9
AC 25, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20 **Perception** +10
Speed 5
Saving Throws +2 (+4 against ongoing damage);
Action Points 1

Standard Actions

⊕ **Greataxe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 1d12 + 11 damage.
Effect: The target is marked until the end of Aurax's next turn.

⸸ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Aurax uses *greataxe* twice. If both attacks hit the same target, the target also falls prone.

Minor Actions

Warforged Resolve (healing) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: Aurax gains 10 temporary hit points and can make a saving throw against an ongoing damage effect. If it uses this power while bloodied, it also regains 10 hit points.

Triggered Actions

⸸ **Weakening Strike** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An adjacent enemy marked by Aurax makes an attack that doesn't include Aurax as a target.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 1 (triggering enemy); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 1d12 + 11 damage, and the target is weakened until the end of its turn.

Skills Athletics +16, Endurance +14, Intimidate +12
Str 24 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+5)
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+7)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment greataxe

2 Warforged Enforcers **Level 7 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (living construct) XP 300 each

HP 100; **Bloodied** 50 **Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17 **Perception** +9
Speed 5
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage

Standard Actions

⊕ **Greataxe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 6 damage.

⊹ **Reaping Strike** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 9 damage.

Minor Actions

Warforged Resolve (healing) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The warforged gains 6 temporary hit points and can make a saving throw against an ongoing damage effect. If it uses this power while bloodied, it also regains 6 hit points.

Skills Athletics +14, Endurance +13, Intimidate +8
Str 22 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 20 (+8) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment greataxe

Conclusion

If the adventurers apprehend Drago and strike a deal with him, the King's Dark Lanterns insist on taking the dwarf into custody (see Event 7: The Spellbook). Drago goes willingly, knowing that his Aurum contacts will secure his release in short order.

Luckily for the heroes, the Son of Khyber does not appear in this adventure. Even so, the assault on the refuge earns the adventurers his enmity, particularly if Thora Tarkanan died in battle. If the heroes leave her corpse behind, arrangements are made immediately to raise it from the dead. If the characters take the corpse with them and turn it over to the local authorities, it disappears in transit when sent out for burial or disposal. In either case, the characters could run afoul of Thora at some later date, and the Son of Khyber is likely to harry them in the future.

The characters' infiltration of the House Tarkanan refuge does no go unnoticed. Other factions seeking the spellbook shadow the adventurers or find their way here by other means. Content to let the adventurers deal with Drago (or at least to soften him up first), all these interested parties arrive in the aftermath of combat. Go to Event 7: The Spellbook.

Event 7: The Spellbook

Roleplaying Encounter (1,750 XP) and Possible Combat Encounter (Level Variable)

In the aftermath of the final battle, the adventurers have time to take a short rest before the Aundairian ambassador, Helais ir'Lantar, arrives for his meeting with Drago. Adjust the read-aloud text depending on whether Drago is alive or dead, and whether the adventurers have the spellbook in plain sight.

A shout from an adjacent corridor precedes the arrival of two soldiers in the livery of Aundair, with hand crossbows at the ready. These Royal Eyes are protecting the figure who steps up between them—Ambassador Helais ir'Lantar.

"Your presence here is . . . unexpected," the ambassador says. "But I hope it changes nothing as regards my purpose. I seek the spellbook of Krystival Valorek. I assume you are prepared to deliver it?"

Even as the heroes respond to Helais, more commotion becomes audible within the refuge.

From the distance comes the sudden sound of raised voices and sword on shield. Barked orders quiet the combat, but the looks on the faces of the Royal Eyes agents make it clear that this new disturbance has nothing to do with them.

Five additional well-armed figures stride forth from the depths of the refuge, eyeing each other warily—two Dark Lanterns of Breland on one side, and Spymaster Malen Torr on the other, with a pair of Karrnathi guards at his side. Both groups stand well away from each other.

One of the Dark Lanterns speaks first. "Breland and Sharn thank you for your efforts in reclaiming the spellbook, and for stalling this Aundairian's pathetic attempts to possess it. The King's Dark Lanterns will take over the handling of this matter. The book, if you please."

Malen Torr laughs out loud as his guards raise their heavy crossbows threateningly. "This relic, rightfully claimed from the Mournland and stolen from our embassy, belongs to Karrnath. The book returns with me, or the repercussions will be dire."

With your group squarely in the middle of them, all three factions stand prepared for battle.

The Brelish and Karrnathi factions have shadowed the party to the refuge, hoping that the characters would lead them to the tome. The Karrns and the Aundairians aren't spoiling for a fight with the Dark Lanterns on Brelish soil, lest they spark a diplomatic incident. If the heroes decide to give the spellbook to either of these foreign powers, the Dark Lanterns attack the heroes, as well as whichever faction gets the book. If the characters keep the spellbook for themselves, the Dark Lanterns report the matter to the King's Citadel, letting the crown decide whether further action is necessary.

The final outcome of the adventure is in the players' hands—it is not simply a function of the skills of their characters and the luck of the dice. The heroes are free to hand the spellbook over to any faction, creating enemies in the process and possibly inciting a tense four-way battle. They are equally free to attempt to keep the spellbook, or to destroy it. Doing so makes enemies of all three factions, but it also prevents the spellbook from threatening the fragile peace of Thronehold. See "Ending the Adventure" for more information.

Aundair: Helais ir'Lantar speaks for Queen Aurala and the Royal Eyes of Aundair.

Breland: Two Dark Lanterns named Naren Marr and Endol Drennyk speak for King Boranel and the Dark Lanterns.

Karrnath: Spymaster Malen Torr handles the negotiation for Karrnath. Two knights from the Order of Rekkenmark protect the spymaster. If Torr was slain in event 3, the vampire Zanifer handles the negotiation. If she too is dead, a Karrnathi spy named Yelkor Varkasian fills the role. (Use Malen Torr's statistics for Yelkor.)

Ambassador Helais ir'Lantar **Level 19 Controller**
Medium immortal humanoid, rakshasa XP 2,400

HP 182; **Bloodied** 91 **Initiative** +14
AC 33, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 31 **Perception** +19
Speed 7 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

⊕ **Savage Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
Hit: 4d6 + 10 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of Helais's next turn. If the target is already blinded, it is instead stunned (save ends) .

Restrain Creature (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +22 vs. Will
Hit: The target is restrained until Helais ends the effect as a minor action or until the target ends the effect as a move action.
Aftereffect: The target takes 3d8 + 8 psychic damage.

Frightful Phantom (fear, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +22 vs. Will
Hit: 4d8 + 15 psychic damage, and the target must use a free action to move its speed away from Helais, provoking opportunity attacks as normal.

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Helais disguises himself to appear as any Medium humanoid until he uses this power again or until he drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 38 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

Skills Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, History +21, Insight +19
Str 21 (+14) **Dex** 20 (+14) **Wis** 20 (+14)
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 24 (+16) **Cha** 24 (+16)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common

2 Royal Eyes Agents **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 300 each

HP 75; **Bloodied** 37 **Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21 **Perception** +10
Speed 6

Traits

Combat Advantage
The agent deals 2d6 extra damage on melee attacks and ranged attacks against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Rapier** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, and if the agent is marked by the target, that condition ends.

Hand Crossbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

Flamboyant Strike (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, the agent can slide the target 1 square, and the target is dazed until the end of the agent's next turn.

Minor Actions

Information is Power ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 5 (one creature in the burst); +10 vs. Will
Hit: The target grants combat advantage to the agent (save ends).

Cunning Escape ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: If the agent is marked, that condition ends. In addition, the agent can shift 1 square.

Skills Bluff +13, History +9, Insight +10, Streetwise +13, Thievery +12
Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 11 (+3) **Int** 13 (+4) **Cha** 21 (+8)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, thieves' tools

2 King's Dark Lanterns **Level 8 Elite Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 700 each

HP 136; **Bloodied** 68 **Initiative** +13
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21 **Perception** +12
Speed 6
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions

Bastard Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 11 damage.

Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 11 damage.

Blinding Strike (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 11 damage, and the Dark Lantern shifts 2 squares and has total concealment against the target until the end of the Dark Lantern's next turn.

Double Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The Dark Lantern uses *bastard sword* twice, *longbow* twice, or *blinding strike* twice.

Minor Actions

Blend In (illusion) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The Dark Lantern turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.

Hunter's Quarry ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: The Dark Lantern designates the nearest enemy it can see as its quarry. Once per round, when the Dark Lantern hits its quarry with an attack, the attack deals 1d6 extra damage. The Dark Lantern can designate only one enemy as its quarry at a time.

Skills Athletics +13, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +10, Stealth +14, Streetwise +10, Thievery +14
Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+7)
Con 14 (+6) **Int** 15 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+5)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, bastard sword, longbow, 15 arrows, cloak

Spymaster Malen Torr **Level 8 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 350

HP 65; **Bloodied** 32 **Initiative** +13
AC 22, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20 **Perception** +12
Speed 6

Traits

Combat Advantage
Malen deals 2d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to him.

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 6 damage, or 4d6 + 12 if the attack ends Malen's *veil of invisibility*.

Poisoned Blade (poison, weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 5 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target falls unconscious until the end of the encounter or until it takes damage.

Veil of Invisibility (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Malen becomes invisible to all enemies until the start of his next turn or until he attacks.

Skills Insight +12, Intimidate +11, Stealth +14, Streetwise +11
Str 14 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+9) **Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 11 (+4) **Int** 16 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+6)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment short sword

2 Rekkenmark Knights **Level 9 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 400 each

HP 98; **Bloodied** 49 **Initiative** +6
AC 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21 **Perception** +6
Speed 5

Standard Actions

Greatsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target loses all of its temporary hit points.
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the knight's next turn.

Crossbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 10 damage.

Crippling Strike (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 10 damage, the target falls prone, and the target is immobilized and cannot stand up (save ends both).

Move Actions

Fortify Ally ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The knight takes a -2 penalty to AC, and one ally adjacent to the knight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills Athletics +13, Endurance +13, Heal +11, Intimidate +12
Str 19 (+8) **Dex** 11 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+7)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment plate armor, greatsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, cloak

Conclusion

Award XP for this event's roleplaying according to how well the characters engaged the NPCs, and how they determined the spellbook's final fate. Determine any combat XP based on which foes the adventurers faced and how effective their response was.

If the characters let the representatives of Aundair, Breland, and Karrnath "duke it out" without intervening, Helais (by virtue of his true nature) prevails and seizes the book, but he renders his opposition unconscious rather than killing anyone. The characters should receive no XP for NPCs who fall in such a battle.

Ending the Adventure

The adventurers must ultimately decide what to do with the spellbook and how to deal with the consequences.

Give the Spellbook to Breland: The Brelish spy network has every right to claim the spellbook in the interests of "national security," but it's unclear what Breland plans do with the information that might be contained within. Even if Aundair played a role in the destruction of Cyre, King Boranel won't allow the book's secrets to undermine his efforts to mend fences with Queen Aurala. The revelations contained within the book might, however, give the king new insights into the mind of Aurala's scheming brother, Adal.

If the characters ignore the Brelish agents in event 7 and give the spellbook to Lord Iyan of the Sharn Watch, he quickly surrenders it to the Dark Lanterns.

Give the Spellbook to Karrnath: Once Ambassador Syra ir'Tarrn has the book safely back at the Karrnath embassy, she vows that it will never again see the light of day, because King Kaius has made it clear that the book is not to be used in a bid to weaken the Treaty of Thronehold. Not long after the book returns to the embassy, Syra is recalled to Korth and never seen again. By the time her replacement arrives in Sharn, the book is gone—hidden elsewhere by Spymaster Torr on Kaius's orders.

Give the Spellbook to Aundair: Helais promises to deliver the book to Queen Aurala, claiming that she will keep its possible secrets safe in exchange for concealing her brother's role in spying on Cyre. Helais, however, is actually a rakshasa in league with the Lords of Dust. Once he takes possession of the spellbook, it has an equal chance of falling into the hands of Adal or the Lords of Dust, and mysteriously disappearing in either case.

Give the Spellbook to the Boromar Clan: The adventurers might take this approach simply to avoid the political struggle they are caught up in. Once he realizes how important the spellbook is, Vink Boromar is happy to take it off the adventurers' hands. In this case, Saidan Boromar has no qualms about uncovering any secrets the book might hold, then using that information to blackmail the kings and queens of Khorvaire.

Keep the Spellbook: The Brelish, Karrnathi, and Aundairian authorities oppose any attempt by the heroes to keep the spellbook. The heroes can prevent anyone from taking the book by force if they claim that they already know its secrets, and that those secrets will go public if anything happens to the characters. In the aftermath, agents of all three nations continue to harass the heroes, and no agent will rest until his or her faction reclaims the spellbook.

Destroy the Book: The spellbook survived the magical cataclysm of the Day of Mourning by chance, and it can easily be destroyed by conventional means. Doing so protects Aundair and helps preserve the delicate peace between the Five Nations, but it prevents King Boranel and King Kaius from using the book's possible secrets as leverage against Queen Aurala and her brother. In the aftermath, additional threats come from the Aurum and the Boromar Clan, and both organizations interfere in the party's business thereafter whenever it suits them.

The Fate of Peace

Just as the Eberron campaign setting does not answer the question of what really happened on the Day of Mourning, this adventure does not assume that Krystival Valorek's spellbook contains an actual record of those events. The truth of whatever information the spellbook holds is your choice to make—but even the potential for it to reveal the truth behind the creation of the Mournland could be enough to upset the delicate balance of power in Khorvaire. Aundair's insistence on reclaiming the book is seen by some as proof that Queen Aurala or her brother Adal (Aundair's minister of magic) are concealing Aundair's responsibility for the Day of Mourning—perhaps even the fact that Krystival Valorek himself was somehow responsible.

If the book returns to Karrnath, King Kaius refrains from using it to undermine peace. But his military leaders (including Lady Kelani's father, General Yorin Thauram) might be more inclined to seek proof that one of the other Five Nations caused the Day of Mourning. The Dark Lanterns are likely to just keep the book in hiding, but doing so might lead to accusations that they are covering up Breland's involvement in the cataclysm that destroyed Cyre.

Word of the spellbook's existence might reach the ears of Cyre's exiled prince, Oargev ir'Wynarn. Resolved to assign blame for the Day of Mourning to someone, he might hire the adventurers to steal the spellbook from whoever ends up possessing it.

The ultimate impact of the spellbook—or of its destruction—on the world and the campaign is entirely up to you.

About the Authors

Christopher Perkins is the D&D Senior Producer at Wizards of the Coast. He's not on Facebook, he doesn't have a Twitter account, and he has no "friends." That gives him lots of spare time to write D&D adventures on the side, which is as close to heaven as he'll ever get. "Dead for a Spell," his first Eberron adventure, was inspired by his love for James Bond movies.

Scott Fitzgerald Gray (9th-level layabout, vindictive neutral) started gaming in high school and has worked as a writer and editor much of the time since then. After belatedly realizing he could combine both vocations in 2004, he's been making up for lost time as a freelance RPG editor and designer, thus finally working at the job he really wanted when he was sixteen. More information on Scott and his work can be found at insaneangel.com.

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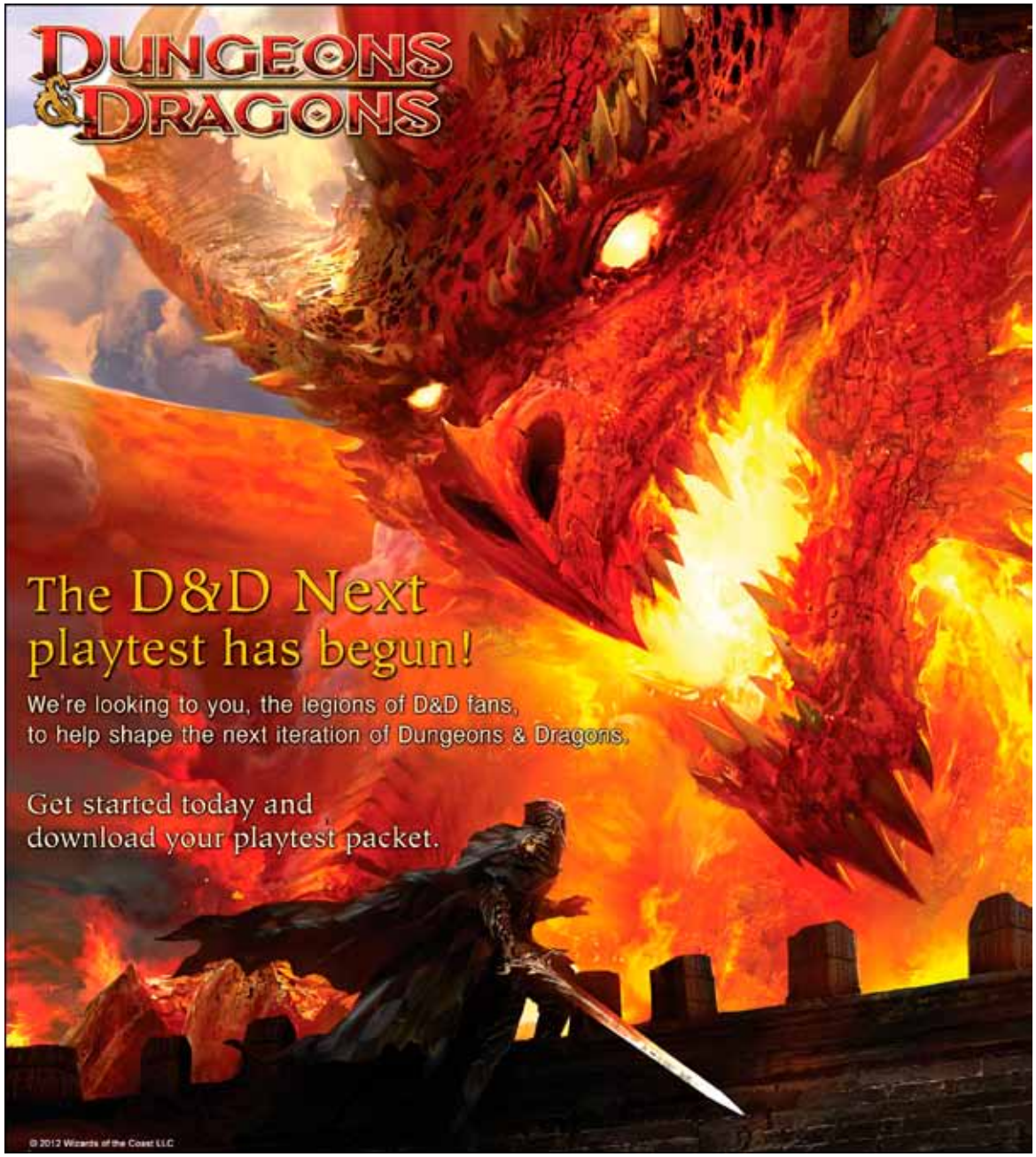
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The Xanathar

Beholder Crime Lord of Waterdeep

By Derek Myers

Illustration by Jason Juta

"I don't know if the Xanathar really exists, but as long as I'm working in Waterdeep, I make sure he gets his cut. Why risk the alternative?"

–Termerin, cat burglar

The name "Xanathar" (or often "the Xanathar") has been whispered in the shadows of Waterdeep for over a century. Although the identity of the infamous leader of the Xanathar's Guild has never been discovered, rogues, thieves, cutpurses, and smugglers operating in the city know better than to dismiss stories of his existence.

Many believe that the Xanathar is a fictitious villain whose name is invoked to instill fear in the weak. It's not possible, they reason, for one individual to run an organization as large and complex as a Waterdeep thieves' guild for such a long time. After all, the stories of the Xanathar go back more than a hundred years. Perhaps the crime lord existed in the past, but common wisdom suggests that he is surely dead now.

Strange Succession

The Xanathar is quite real, and one of the best-kept secrets in Waterdeep is that the head of the Xanathar's Guild is a beholder. Many beholders have taken up the mantle of Xanathar during the guild's long history; the current holder of the title has been operating in the city for the past thirteen years.

Xanathar was the true name of the first beholder to run the guild. After it attained significant power over the criminal underworld in Waterdeep, other beholders took notice. Xanathar was assassinated by a rival called The Eye, which secretly took the dead leader's place. When The Eye was killed by adventurers, a third beholder stepped in to assume the role.

Over the years, many beholders have likewise claimed the title of Xanathar, some after killing their predecessors and some in a peaceful transition. The elder beholder Xandulzrithral fell into the latter category, choosing to retire from the role rather than continue to live as a target. Adding to the potential confusion, other beholders also lurk in Waterdeep, and although they have nothing to do with the Xanathar's Guild, their activities are often mistaken for the work of Xanathar. One such rival is Xlorothxrau, better known as "Lothjaws." The beholders that fill the role of Xanathar are usually happy to see their crimes pinned on others.

The penultimate Xanathar (once called Izulktur) held power for only a short time. It was originally part of a beholder cluster working alongside four others of its race. After becoming Xanathar, Izulktur continued to communicate magically with the other members of its cluster, sharing reports on its progress and the state of affairs in Waterdeep. Eventually the creature grew bored. The beholder disliked the restrictions necessary to keep its identity secret, especially being confined to its lair for so long. Xanathar ordered its cluster to send a replacement. The group sent a servant, a drow named Kal'dir, to Waterdeep to assist with the transition.

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Kal'dir revealed that Zushaxx, a beholder new to the cluster, was interested in taking over as Xanathar. Before Zushaxx came to Waterdeep to assume the office, Izulktur took Kal'dir into its confidence and shared many secrets. The drow was instructed to assist Zushaxx during the transition and serve the new leader. The cluster agreed to repay Kal'dir's loyalty by exacting revenge on those who killed the drow's family.

When Zushaxx took over, it immediately replaced the guild's top lieutenants and promoted new agents, starting with Kal'dir. The drow was a valuable aide in the selection process. Zushaxx spent much of its first year as Xanathar reading through the vast library amassed by its predecessors. Exposure to so much information drove its thirst for more knowledge.

The current Xanathar, young and ambitious, is more impulsive than its predecessor. The guild leader is willing to take chances to increase its power, and it thinks the time might soon be right to emerge from the shadows to reveal its true identity as a beholder to more than just its trusted lieutenants.

In the Game: If you want statistics for Xanathar, you can use the beholder in *Monster Vault*™.

The Inner Circle

One of the keys to the lasting success of the Xanathar is anonymity. The fewer people who know the guild leader is a beholder, the better. Thus, it has four lieutenants who carry out its daily operations in Waterdeep: Kal'dir, Quid, Sial Sapphire, and Draak. On occasion they have masqueraded as the Xanathar, their identities magically protected when undertaking the role. Each lieutenant has a different area of responsibility, but they usually work together to ensure the guild's overall success.

Although the Xanathar tells its lieutenants that they are all equally important, the four compete with one another constantly. The beholder believes that the struggle keeps them sharp. It encourages their rivalry and often manipulates them into confrontations with one another.

Quid, Sial, and Draak suspect that Kal'dir works with the Xanathar to fuel the strife among the group. They're right. The beholder is fascinated by the drow's prowess at scheming and realizes that it has much to gain by ensuring that its lieutenants never completely trust one another.

Kal'dir

"Kal'dir doesn't talk much, but he's always watching and listening. I'll bet he knows a lot more than anyone gives him credit for."

—Gabriella, serving girl

Kal'dir is in his physical prime. He is tall for a drow, which makes him all the more intimidating, and scars on his body hint at his violent past. He wears finely crafted drow chainmail beneath his dark clothing and a drow house insignia (which he usually keeps hidden) around his neck. Kal'dir is always armed with a short sword and a dagger—magical gifts from Xanathar—and he wears a drow hand crossbow on his hip, its bolts coated with poison.

As with all of Xanathar's lieutenants, Kal'dir is naturally charismatic. He can shift from charming to deadly with the most subtle of facial expressions. During social interactions, he fully exploits his drow heritage. He is intensely private, though, and engages in conversation only when the situation warrants it.

Raised in a matriarchal society, Kal'dir defers to the authority of his female peers. He works closely with Sial and over the years has developed feelings for her. He even cut his hair short because she once mentioned that she liked it that way.

In the Game: If you want statistics for Kal'dir, you can use the drow swashbuckler on page 122 of the *Neverwinter*™ *Campaign Setting*. Add the following power.

Standard Actions

Hand Crossbow (poison, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Background

Kal'dir doesn't talk about his drow past, but he was once a noble. His fighting prowess and strategic mind reflect his years of training. He is the only surviving member of his family, and with no resources, Kal'dir wandered the Underdark for years before discovering the beholder cluster. He was charmed, and served the creatures for a long time. When the beholders needed an emissary, they released their hold on Kal'dir and sent him to Waterdeep to assist with the Xanathar's transition.

Other than the beholders in the cluster, Kal'dir is the only one who knows that the current Xanathar is not the original. When Xanathar (Zushaxx) took office, it had Kal'dir assassinate most of the previous leader's lieutenants so it could choose replacements.

Guild Responsibilities

When Xanathar needs something done that involves violence, it turns to Kal'dir. The drow's methods are unscrupulous, and he gets results. His superior combat skills, intimidating demeanor, and sharp wit make him the perfect choice to handle blackmail, extortion, enforcement, and assassinations for Xanathar.

Territory

Kal'dir spends time in Dock Ward and the ruined harbor area known as Mistshore. He carefully watches people traveling by ship to stay informed about who is coming and going. The drow has been around Waterdeep long enough that his reputation precedes him in the underworld. He hasn't had to prove himself in a long time but will do so if necessary. Kal'dir often frequents Dock Ward taverns,

including the Golden Serpent, the Last Wish, and the Broken Sword. People in the ward know and fear him.

Quid

"Quid's the best card player I've ever had the fortune, or should I say misfortune, of playing against. It's like he can read minds or see through the cards. He never loses. No one's that lucky—he has to be cheating. Uh, please don't tell him I said that."

—Jarrios, local merchant

Quid is one of the most flamboyant elves in Waterdeep, dressing in bright colors and the latest fashions. He keeps his hair long but constantly changes its style.

Quid's most prized possession is a magic dagger he won in a card game. The blade is frost white, and the hilt has an intricate carving of a white dragon. The dagger is equally deadly as a traditional weapon or as the focus for his spells.

The elf is quite likable; his glowing charisma helps him win over enemies and avoid unnecessary fights. A renowned gambler, Quid loves a good game of chance and is driven not by the stakes but by the thrill of an honest victory. He takes great pride in winning fair and square, but nevertheless he is often accused of cheating. Those who press the issue too strongly get a closer look at his dagger than they'd like.

Just because he doesn't cheat at the table doesn't mean that he is incapable of trickery. Quid is a master pickpocket and a skilled liar. Still, he prefers to be as honest as often as possible, which makes it easier to pass off a lie when necessary.

His love of gambling lands him in trouble regularly. The elf has tremendous difficulty passing up a game, especially if his opponent is someone who bested him in the past. His one saving grace is that he won't bet what he doesn't have, and he knows better than to gamble with Xanathar's money.

In the Game: If you want statistics for Quid, you can use the eladrin twilight incanter in *Monster Vault* (presented in the Elf entry). Remove the *fey step* power and the bonus to saving throws, and add this trait.

Traits

Wild Step

Quid ignores difficult terrain whenever he shifts.

You can also add the following optional melee attack.

Standard Actions

Chill Blade (cold) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC

Hit: 2d4 + 4 cold damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of Quid's next turn.

Background

Quid grew up on the streets of Waterdeep. Stealing what he needed to survive forced him to become an accomplished pickpocket before he was recruited into Xanathar's guild. In his youth, the elf lacked discipline. He borrowed heavily from the guild, only to lose everything because he took unnecessary risks. If not for the timely emergence of his arcane abilities, Quid would have been killed by Xanathar's operatives. Instead, the beholder put the young sorcerer to work. It took years for Quid to pay back what he owed to Xanathar, at which point he vowed never to be in anyone's debt ever again.

Over the years Quid has lent money to many gamblers in desperate need of a few coins. It's widely known that he can be repaid with information, which keeps him up to date on almost all the illicit activities in Waterdeep.

Guild Responsibilities

Quid oversees Xanathar's gambling and smuggling interests. Over the past few years, his magical abilities have grown considerably, and the beholder put him in charge of the guild's magical interests. The elf has added and reinforced magical wards and traps throughout most of Xanathar's lairs.

Recently, Quid has attempted to broker a private agreement between the guild and some well-placed senior members of the Watchful Order of Magists & Protectors. In return for concessions from the wizards regarding how much attention they devote to the order or its members, Xanathar (through Quid) helps them acquire magic items, spell components, and lost lore.

Territory

Wherever people gamble, Quid shows up eventually. His preferred gaming houses are the One-Eyed Dragon in Trades Ward and the Gentle Mermaid in North Ward, and he receives invitations to private games for high and low stakes all around Waterdeep. Everyone hopes to beat him and tell their friends about it. The elf makes a point of playing frequent pick-up games in Dock Ward so he can meet with his smuggler contacts.

Sial Sapphire

"I like Sial—she's a lot of fun. Just don't let that pretty face fool you. You never know if she's telling the truth or a lie. About the only thing you can be sure of is that she's working an angle."

—Simars, bartender

Sial's true appearance is a mystery. She constantly changes her clothes, hair, and body language to suit the situation. Most often she seems to be a lithe, physically fit half-elf with long brown hair, but she can easily pass as a human teenager or a full-blooded elf depending on her attire and mannerisms. She also has an affinity for gemstones and usually wears expensive earrings.

Sial is a social chameleon and can change her attitude and personality as needed. This ability makes it hard for anyone to know when she's acting and when she's sincere. The half-elf is exceptionally manipulative, and when she senses an opening, she doesn't hesitate to exploit it to her advantage.

When dealing with Xanathar directly, Sial is courteous. She tries to be honest during such interactions, but the beholder is the only creature to which she extends this courtesy.

Sial's legendary dishonesty is no secret. Many people know that she weaves intricate webs of lies. Her reputation is one of the reasons that Kal'dir has strong feelings toward her—Sial often behaves like a drow. She is well aware of Kal'dir's affection for her and takes advantage of him.

In the Game: If you want statistics for Sial, you can use the half-elf con artist in *Monster Manual*® 2.

Background

Sial is so good at what she does that it took months for her expertise as a thief to come to the attention of Xanathar's network of informants. Kal'dir found the half-elf and persuaded her to meet with the guild leader. Standing face to face with the beholder, Sial did the unthinkable—she challenged its authority. She told Xanathar that its people weren't doing their jobs if she could operate so long without scrutiny from the guild. She claimed to be the best burglar in Waterdeep and said that if Xanathar wanted results, it should put her in charge.

Impressed by Sial's direct approach and unyielding confidence, the beholder took an immediate liking to the half-elf. It offered her a place among its trusted lieutenants.

Guild Responsibilities

When Sial first became a lieutenant, she oversaw Xanathar's interests in thievery and burglary. It didn't take long before the guild leader realized her value as an undercover operative. The beholder expanded her portfolio and appointed her as the guild's spymaster. Since then she has cultivated contacts throughout Waterdeep. Little happens that she doesn't know about. The other lieutenants have their own spy networks and are supposed to share their findings with Sial for the good of the guild. Instead, they often withhold details they think they can use to their advantage. They don't realize that Sial uses many of the same sources and knows when Kal'dir, Quid, and Draak are holding out on her.

Territory

Of Xanathar's four lieutenants, Sial is the hardest to find because she has no set territory and usually disguises her appearance. To keep up on current events, she spends time in all the districts of Waterdeep, cultivating relationships and building her information network. She enjoys lavish parties and often arranges to be someone's date to gain admission.

Draak

"If Draak tells you to do something, you better do it, 'cause he won't tell you a second time. Anyone who doesn't follow his orders is lucky if they live long enough to regret it."

—Lanador, slaver and business associate

The dragonborn Draak is big even by the standards of his people. Scars covering his rusty red scales betray his upbringing as a slave. Given his tremendous size and muscular build, it's unlikely that he has acquired any new scars recently. Draak prefers to carry a weapon that he can wield with both hands. If he ever has to fight while unarmed, he'd still be dangerous using only his fists and his fiery breath.

Draak's personality matches his physical stature. Gruff and serious, the dragonborn is a natural leader who motivates through intimidation. He takes pleasure in the suffering of others, making him perfect for his job. Ruthless in battle and in business, he does what's best for himself before thinking of anyone else.

Since joining Xanathar, Draak has shown loyalty to the beholder and the guild, but he has walked a fine line on many occasions. He believes that most other humanoids are beneath him and don't deserve his respect. The few who have earned his admiration find him easier to deal with.

The dragonborn doesn't care for the internal politics of the guild or the other lieutenants. He knows that he is the most physically powerful of the four and treats the others as subordinates. The only one of Xanathar's lieutenants that Draak has ever shown any concession to is Kal'dir. Because Draak's slave operations generate so much revenue for Xanathar, the dragonborn believes that none of the others would jeopardize its stability by killing him.

In the Game: If you want statistics for Draak, you can use the Dythan Legion's vanguard in *Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale*™, changing the breath weapon to deal fire damage instead of poison damage.

Background

Draak was born into slavery and raised in captivity. Highly intelligent, he learned a great deal through careful observation. He realized that as long as people believe you to be capable of hurting them, they will do as commanded.

Draak escaped the bonds of slavery during a revolt that he orchestrated. Later he worked as a mercenary, often leading others in battle. When he came to Waterdeep, he encountered some of his former slavers, although they didn't recognize him. Rather than kill them, he thought that enslaving them would be a more suitable punishment. A few well-placed inquiries put Draak in touch with Xanathar's slavers. The dragonborn captured his former masters and made a handsome profit in the process. Impressed with Draak's abilities, the beholder put him to work in the guild's slaving operations. Within a year, he had taken charge. Xanathar made him a lieutenant and has not regretted the decision.

Guild Responsibilities

As Xanathar's slavemaster, Draak controls the most profitable and dangerous of the beholder's business interests. He manages all slave auctions and sales, oversees the supervision and detention of slaves in the pens, and acquires new inventory. Draak employs fewer guild members than the other lieutenants do, but that doesn't worry him because his followers are as tough as adamantine and fiercely loyal.

Due to the huge risks involved with slave trafficking, Draak seldom keeps many slaves on hand. He prefers to line up buyers first and then acquire the appropriate slaves to fill their needs, often kidnapping people off the streets of Waterdeep. Although he usually deals in humanoid slaves, he has no qualms about capturing and selling nonhuman creatures. Of course, as the risk goes up, so does the price.

Draak works closely with Sial Sapphire to stay informed on the latest news and rumors in Waterdeep. Before he agrees to sell slaves to someone he hasn't met, he asks Sial to gather information on the potential client. This precaution reduces the risk of law enforcement or adventurers infiltrating his operations and causing problems.

Territory

Draak's slaving operation is based in Skullport, where he makes no effort to hide. The dragonborn is one of the most dangerous creatures in the Undercity, and he knows it. He also spends a lot of time in the Mistshore neighborhood in Waterdeep. While there, Draak is often found at the Three Arrows tavern. Although he rarely drinks, he uses the seedy establishment as a place to meet new clients.

Guild Politics

The Xanathar's Guild has hundreds of members. The four lieutenants have their own areas of influence and are responsible for the guild members who operate within those spheres. The lieutenants encourage their members to actively oppose other guild members who report to one of the rival lieutenants. This practice keeps the true nature of the guild's leadership shrouded in mystery and further deflects suspicion about Xanathar's identity.

The beholder has contacts up and down the Sword Coast. In the proper circles, a letter bearing the guild leader's mark carries great influence. Xanathar has many connections in Luskan to the north and in the thieves' guild in Baldur's Gate to the south, and it also has considerable pull in the Underdark far north and west of Waterdeep. Kal'dir is often sent to these areas as an emissary to reaffirm the beholder's strength and its loyalty to its allies. Occasionally, Xanathar sends one of its lieutenants outside Waterdeep to take on a particularly dangerous or high-profile job.

Xanathar's Lairs

The true nature of the Xanathar has remained hidden for so long in part because the beholders that previously bore the title maintained multiple lairs and changed locations constantly. At any given time, Xanathar (Zushaxx) has three active lairs and has its network on the lookout for suitable new locations. The longest it has kept any lair operational is five years.

All of Xanathar's lairs are underground and well guarded. Its lieutenants know how to find and enter each one. Each lair is equipped with a teleportation circle that allows the beholder to move between them effortlessly.

Xanathar finds elves fascinating and has more than a dozen elf slaves that tend to the day-to-day tasks required to maintain the lairs. Draak breaks the will and spirit of all slaves before the beholder charms them with magic. One notable exception is Arizza, a human who works as Xanathar's bookkeeper. Although she lacks social graces, she has an eidetic memory, which makes her exceptionally good with numbers and figures. Arizza has no family or friends and lives with Xanathar. She has developed a strange attachment to the beholder and would never betray it or do anything to hurt it. Arizza attends most of Xanathar's business meetings so the guild leader can exploit her memory to recall small details.

Like many beholders, Xanathar enjoys bright and vivid colors. Over the past decade, it has chosen a dominant color for each lair, and the guild lieutenants refer to each location by its hue.

Red Lair

Red Lair is located beneath Dock Ward, the main entrance deep within the sewers. This lair has been maintained the longest and is the most heavily guarded. Xanathar has expanded Red Lair into

multiple rooms, many of which are accessible only through vertical shafts up or down from the main floor.

Blue Lair

Blue Lair is located beneath the ruins of an old warehouse near Skullport. Here, Xanathar does most of its business and maintains the bulk of its material wealth. Of the three currently active lairs, Blue Lair has the fewest number of rooms. Its traps and defenses rely more on physical deterrents than on magic and were created by Draak, which gives the dragonborn great pride. He has his own quarters here, and it's the only lair where he spends any great amount of time.

Purple Lair

Purple Lair is located in the Warrens. Due to the abundance of foot traffic in the tunnels and the lack of law and order, Xanathar's lieutenants and agents can use Purple Lair without arousing suspicion. Xanathar's meetings with associates or business partners take place here. The lair contains many secret rooms and hidden passages, and the design of the central meeting chamber allows sound to travel with remarkable clarity to the adjacent chambers.

Purple Lair is the closest thing the guild has to a base of operations. It's the only lair where Xanathar allows its lieutenants to bring strangers. Due to worries about infiltration, the beholder is making plans to abandon Purple Lair and has started moving its most valuable possessions to Blue Lair and Red Lair.

Hidden Library

Of all the things that Xanathar has acquired over the years, it is most proud of its vast library. The beholder guards the place jealously and has taken great steps to ensure that it is well protected from plunderers. Years earlier, Xanathar lost many precious books when it was forced to abandon a lair ahead of schedule. To prevent that from happening again, the beholder put safeguards in place to protect its collection if it has to desert another lair unexpectedly.

Xanathar's books are kept hundreds of miles away from Waterdeep in a sealed chamber deep within the Underdark. The only way to access the library is through one of the portals in the currently active lairs. The portals are attuned to Xanathar, allowing the beholder to use them freely. Anyone else attempting to do so must carry the right portal key. The guild leader gave keys to Quid and Kal'dir, and, unknown to Xanathar, Sial has recently acquired one from the elf. As an added defense mechanism, Xanathar can permanently collapse any of the portals by speaking a command phrase. Quid knows the phrase because he helped to perform the ritual that created it.

Adventure Hooks

- The heroes learn about an old, abandoned complex deep beneath Waterdeep. Those who have attempted to breach the threshold were deterred by active traps. Perhaps the place isn't as deserted as everyone thinks. Could it be the legendary lair of the mysterious Xanathar?
- A party member who has a shady background or a reputation for unscrupulous activities is approached to join the guild. To prove her worth, the character must complete a job that is dangerous but lucrative. Her friends can help her accomplish the task, but she is ordered to keep her companions in the dark about the guild's involvement.
- While passing through Waterdeep, the party thwarts an opportunity for the guild that would have been extremely profitable. Xanathar is furious about the loss and puts a price on the heads of one or more of the heroes.

About the Author

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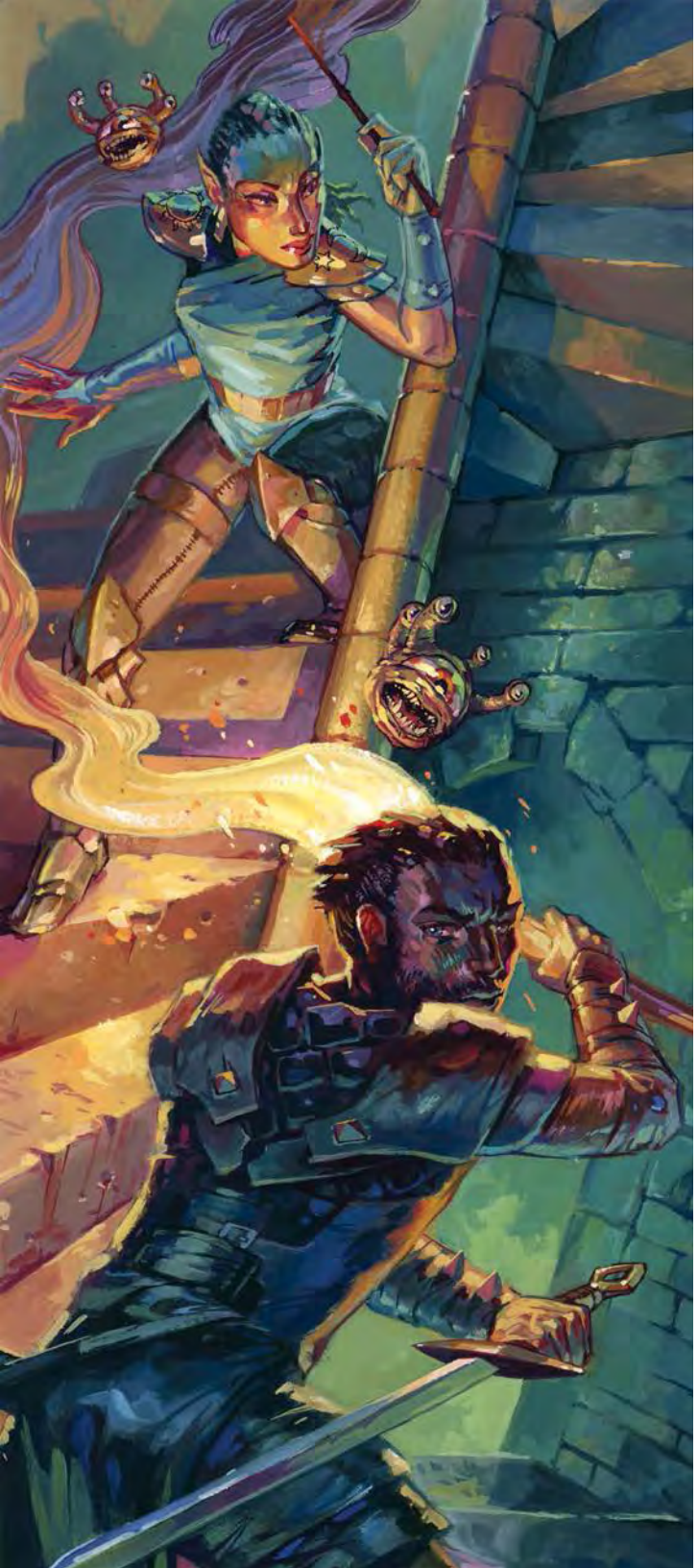

Eyes on the Ball

A Forgotten Realms® adventure for characters of levels 6–8

By Derek Myers

Illustrations by Kai Carpenter and Jim Pavelec

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This adventure takes place in the city of Waterdeep and begins when the player characters witness a kidnapping in progress. After intervening, they learn that this kidnapping was not an isolated incident and that ten elves have gone missing over the past two weeks. To find and rescue the missing elves before it's too late, the characters must agree to work for the Xanathar, a notorious criminal mastermind who also happens to be a beholder.

"Eyes on the Ball" is a D&D® Forgotten Realms adventure for characters of levels 6–8. You'll need a copy of the *Rules Compendium*™ and *Monster Vault*™ to run this adventure. For more information on the Xanathar, see "The Xanathar: Beholder Crime Lord of Waterdeep" in *Dungeon* 206. The adventure is set during 1379 DR, before the Spellplague. If you wish to adapt the adventure for a post-Spellplague campaign (circa 1479 DR), you can assume the Xanathar is still alive, you can replace him with a more current beholder crime lord, such as Xlorothxrau (better known as "Lothjaws"), or you can create your own. Over the years, Waterdeep and Undermountain have played host to numerous beholder crime lords.

Events

Read the following to kick off the adventure:
Waterdeep, City of Splendors and the Jewel of the North, is a melting pot where all civilized races of the Realms live side by side and find business opportunities unavailable elsewhere. A week-long heat wave continues to make the city's inhabitants irritable and uncomfortable. Night brings little respite from the heat, but Waterdhavians have taken advantage of the occasional cool wind blowing in from the Sea of Swords, and the city's night life is flourishing.

The nights are busier as people work and play while the sun sleeps. Rumors of increased criminal activity give you good reason to keep your weapons and equipment readily at hand even when heading to the local tavern. As you head back to your inn after a night of well-earned revelry, a female's scream rises over the evening din, grabbing your attention.

People on the street stop momentarily when they hear the scream, but move away from the disturbance as quickly as possible, happy it's not them in peril and not wanting to get involved. The screams continue but are quickly muffled, as if someone is trying to cover the person's mouth.

The screams come from a nearby alley, and the characters have no trouble finding it. When they reach the mouth of the alley, proceed with event 1.

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Event 1: Alley Attack

Encounter Level 8 (XP 1,750)

The characters respond to screams coming from a nearby alley, where a group of men are accosting Valena Miris, a young elf who was walking the streets with a friend. The men work for a slaver named Lanador and are members of a mercenary company called the Unyielding Sword, although they're reluctant to share this information.

Light: Dim light (moonlight). The alley is filled with shadows.

Monsters: 1 human knife fighter (K), 4 raven roost sharpshooters (S), 2 human thugs (T). The two thugs are holding Valena. The knife fighter watches the mouth of the alley for signs of trouble while the sharpshooters hide in the shadows and on the roofs. The hidden sharpshooters require a DC 22 Perception check to spot.

Other Creatures: Valena Miris (V).

When the characters arrive, read:

Through the shadows, you see a female elf struggling against three human assailants. The men are dressed in dark clothing. One is holding the elf's arms behind her back, and another finally manages to stuff a gag into her mouth to muffle her screams. A third man stands closer to the street, watching for trouble.

If the characters take no steps to approach the alley stealthily, the knife fighter keeping watch automatically spots them and says to the thugs holding the elf, "Trouble! Get her out of here while I take care of them."

The elf is an innocent bystander who swoons just as the characters arrive. She has 1 hit point, defenses 10, and no effective attacks.

Unless they're spotted by one or more characters, the sharpshooters hiding in the shadows and on the roof gain combat advantage during the first round.

Human Knife Fighter (K) Level 7 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid XP 600

HP 162; **Bloodied** 81 **Initiative** +8
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19 **Perception** +11
Speed 7
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions

⨺ **Wounding Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC. The knife fighter scores a critical hit on a roll of 19–20.
Hit: 2d4 + 5 damage, plus 2d6 extra damage if the target is granting combat advantage to the knife fighter, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends). If the knife fighter scores a critical hit, the target takes 6 extra damage.

⨺ **Dance of the Knife** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The knife fighter uses *wounding dagger* twice, shifting up to 2 squares after each attack.

Move Actions

Peerless Tumbler ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Effect: The knife fighter shifts up to 4 squares, ignoring difficult terrain.

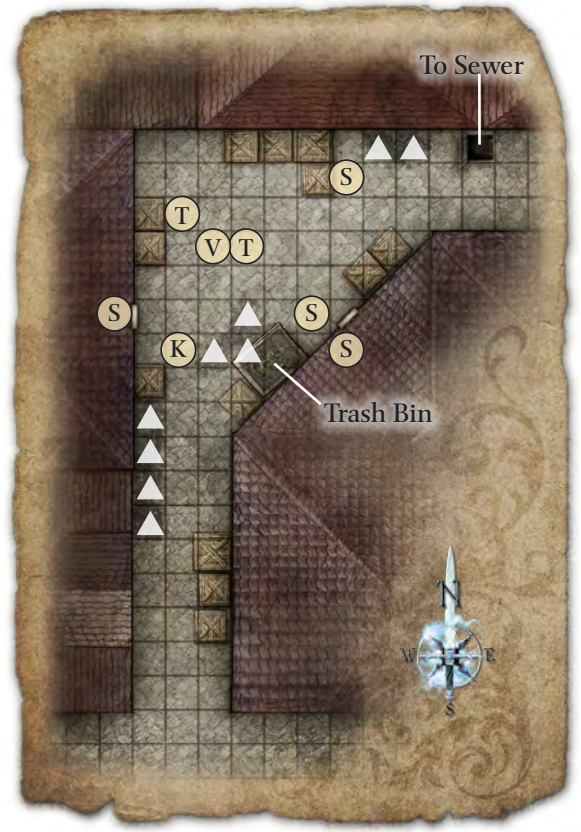
Skills Stealth +11
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+6)
Con 17 (+6) **Int** 13 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+4)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment dagger

Tactics

Human Knife Fighter: The knife fighter tries to flank enemies and use *dance of the knife* to spread some ongoing damage around.

Raven Roost Sharpshooters: The sharpshooters at ground level attempt to keep their distance from the party, and use *crossbow* at short range. The sharpshooters on the roof take advantage of *careful aim*.

Human Thugs: One thug throws the elf over his shoulder (a minor action) and climbs down the sewer grate (a move action). The other thug waits for his buddy to climb down into the sewer, then closes the sewer grate and stands on it. He hopes his actions buy time for the first thug to escape with the elf prisoner. The sewer grate cannot be opened until the thug moves or is moved.



Features of the Area

Buildings: The eastern building is 20 feet high. The building to the west is 10 feet high. Climbing either requires a moderate Athletics check.

Debris and Boxes: The debris and boxes are difficult terrain.

Sewer Grate: The sewer grate is open at the start of the encounter. The grate locks as soon as it's closed and requires a moderate Thievery check or a hard Strength check to open. The grate has AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 3, and 60 hit points.

Trash Bin: This wooden trash bin is blocking terrain. Climbing on top of it requires an easy Athletics

2 Human Thugs (T)	Level 7 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +5	
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	
Traits	
Rush into Battle	
Whenever the thug hits a creature with a charge attack, the target grants combat advantage until the end of the thug's next turn.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Club** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 damage.	
Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+4)	
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment club	

check. Stuffed inside the bin is the corpse of Malen Dharran, a young male human who was walking with Valena Miris when they were attacked. Malen put up a fight and was killed (and not so neatly disposed of).

Treasure: The leader of this evil gang (the knife fighter) is a foul cur named Aggarin Volwhik. A hard Perception check reveals a hollow compartment in Aggarin's left boot heel, and inside is a gem worth 500 gp. Aggarin also carries a small pouch holding 15 sp, which he took off the corpse of Malen Dharran.

Sewer Chase

If a thug manages to escape with the elf prisoner, the characters might take umbrage and chase him into Waterdeep's sewers. It quickly becomes apparent that the sewers are a labyrinth. It's not critical that the thug escape with his captive, so if the characters are determined to hunt him down, you can resolve the pursuit quickly using skill checks.

Navigating the maze of sewer tunnels requires a group Dungeoneering check (moderate DC). Only those characters participating in the chase can contribute to the group skill check. If the group check succeeds, have the characters make an easy Perception check. On a success, a character can hear the echoing footfalls of the fleeing thug over the din of dripping water and squeaking rats, and leads the party in pursuit. This success prompts the thug to drop his captive and keep running. Valena is alive and has regained consciousness, but she's eager to leave the sewers. Any character not satisfied with rescuing Valena can catch up with the fleeing thug by making a moderate Athletics or Endurance check. The thug, too winded to fight, quickly surrenders.

4 Raven Roost Sharpshooters (S)	Level 6 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 250 each
HP 55; **Bloodied** 27	**Initiative** +7
AC 20, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17	**Perception** +10
Speed 6	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 damage.	
➶ **Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 15/30 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage.	
Move Actions	
Careful Aim ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The sharpshooter chooses an enemy it can see. If it can still see that enemy at the start of its next turn, its *crossbow* attack power targets the enemy's Reflex, instead of AC, and deals 5 extra damage against it. These benefits last until the end of that turn.	
Free Actions	
Archer's Decoy ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Effect: The sharpshooter gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex until the start of its next turn.	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+5)	
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment studded leather, crossbow, short sword, 20 bolts	

Development

Upon awakening, Valena fears the characters as much as she did the thugs who accosted her. She is distraught, having witnessed Malen Dharran's death and subsequent disposal in the trash bin. An easy Diplomacy check calms her down, but threatening her causes her to scream for help. If asked why she was targeted, Valena says that she and Malen met this evening while walking in the park. They talked about the heat wave, and Malen offered to escort her home to her family's residence. They were set upon in the street and dragged into the alley. She has no clue why they were attacked, although she saw the lead kidnapper steal a pouch from Malen's corpse.

Other than the gem hidden in Aggarin's boot and Malen's stolen pouch of silver coins, the kidnappers carry no treasure. All five men have a similar tattoo on their left forearm: a short sword over a five-pointed star. A hard Streetwise check reveals that this is the symbol of a mercenary company called the Unyielding Sword. They'll work for anyone, for the right price.

Characters can interrogate any captives, but the mercenaries are initially uncooperative and refuse to talk. A hard Intimidate check is enough to make them admit that they're members of the Unyielding Sword. If offered a sufficient bribe (200 gp or more) and promised their freedom, they reveal that they're working for a human slaver named Lanador and that he's the mastermind behind the kidnappings. Lanador hired the Unyielding Sword to gather elf slaves for reasons unknown to the mercenaries. They also reveal that the kidnappings were supposed to stop after tonight; they don't know why.

Aggarin says he received his orders by way of Sending rituals from Eldreth Zanderraum, the flameskull leader of the Unyielding Sword. Neither he nor any of his cohorts know where Eldreth can be found, nor would they tell anyone if they knew.

This group of mercenaries has abducted nine other elves from the streets of Waterdeep. They have

delivered each of them to the subterranean criminal haven of Skullport, where another group picks them up. No one from Aggarin's gang has been to Lanador's lair or knows its whereabouts.

The Watch arrives as the characters finish searching the kidnappers and questioning survivors. At this time, proceed with event 2.

Event 2: The City Watch

Roleplaying Encounter

Constables of the Watch led by a captain named Revin Stormhaven (human male) arrive shortly after the bloody confrontation in the alley. They attempt to take control of the situation.

When the Watch arrives, read:
Four City Watch constables rush into the alley. "Hold!" one demands as they shine their lanterns around and survey the carnage. "Stay where you are, and identify yourselves!"

Once they identify themselves to the constables, the characters are urged to explain what happened. After they give their account, the Watch takes custody of the kidnappers and any corpses visible in the alley.

If Valena was Rescued

The elf runs into the arms of one of the constables and sobs uncontrollably. As long as the characters didn't try to intimidate her before help arrived, she tells the Watch that they rescued her. Otherwise she says nothing and continues crying.

Read:
The Watch captain, sympathetic to the elf's ordeal, turns to you and says, "Thank you for saving this person's life. Over the past two weeks, nine elves have disappeared from the streets of Waterdeep. Perhaps they, too, were victims of these kidnappers. The gods have seen fit to place you in the thick of this mystery. With your further assistance, I believe we can find our missing citizens."

Proceed to "The Watch's Reward."

If Valena was Lost

Dangerous creatures are known to haunt the sewers under Waterdeep, so the constables are reluctant to enter the sewers without additional forces to back them up. In truth, they could scour the sewers for days and never find any sign of Valena or her kidnapper. Instead, they ask the characters for a detailed description of the elf and her abductor, and then make plans to consult with their superiors.

If the characters take an interest in the ongoing investigation, read:
The Watch captain grimaces. "In the past two weeks, nine elves were reported missing. This one makes ten. Perhaps the gods have placed you here for a reason. Your involvement could help us put an end to these disappearances. With your further assistance, I believe we can find our missing citizens."

Proceed to "The Watch's Reward."

The Watch's Reward

The Watch is glad to employ skilled adventurers from time to time, particularly when the threat of danger is high. Captain Stormhaven has had the privilege of working with more than one capable band of adventurers over the years, and he knows what motivates them.

Read:
Captain Stormhaven takes you aside. "Based on what I've seen here tonight, you can clearly handle yourselves. I'd like to hire you to help us put an end to this threat. Other adventurers are already involved, but they've made little progress so far. There's a reward of five hundred gold for each elf returned safely, and the Lords of Waterdeep have offered a bounty of five thousand gold to anyone who can deliver the one responsible for orchestrating the kidnappings."

If the characters ask about Lanador, the constables recognize the name and frown. Lanador, a former captain of the Watch, was arrested and imprisoned ten years ago for conspiring with a criminal organization called the Shadow Thieves against the Lords of Waterdeep. With Lanador's help, the Shadow Thieves were trying to reestablish a foothold in the city after being driven out. Last these constables heard, Lanador was serving a life sentence in prison for treason and conspiracy.

If the characters ask more questions, Captain Stormhaven politely explains that he has to get the prisoners (or their bodies) back to headquarters and notify his superiors of what has happened. He suggests that the characters ask around; there might be information on the street about the kidnappings.

MAJOR QUEST: RESCUE THE ELVES
7th-level Major Quest (300 XP/character)
In addition to the monetary reward promised by Captain Stormhaven of the Watch, the adventurers receive this XP reward for freeing five or more elf slaves and seeing them safely returned to Waterdeep.

Rumors

A character who embraces Stormhaven's suggestion and spends several hours making inquiries about the elves' disappearances, Lanador, or the Unyielding Sword can make a moderate Streetwise check. On a success, the character learns a rumor from the list below. You can either reveal rumors in the order given or pick those that provide information the character is seeking.

- "Some adventurers like yourself killed a bunch of drow hiding in Downshadow, a slum connected to the first level of Undermountain. I hear the drow don't like elves. Maybe they're behind the

kidnappings." (Partially true; Lanador is acquiring elf slaves for a drow wizard, but neither can be found in Downshadow.)

- "A short sword on a five-pointed star? Sounds like the sign of a mercenary group called the Unyielding Sword. Their leader, Eldeth Zanderraum, is a free-willed flameskull that haunts Skullport." (True, although Eldeth is not in Skullport presently.)
- "Lanador used his position in the City Watch to help the Shadow Thieves gain a foothold in the city. The Lords of Waterdeep locked him up for treason and conspiracy, but the slimy cur talked his way out of prison by giving information to authorities that led to the capture of several of his criminal associates." (True.)
- "Lanador was instructed to leave Waterdeep and never return. His current whereabouts are unknown." (Partially true; the Xanathar has learned the location of Lanador's secret lair.)
- "Lanador still has friends in the Shadow Thieves guild. They gave him a place to hide in Skullport after he was exiled for his crimes." (False; although Lanador sought refuge in Skullport, he wasn't there long before assassins sent by his "old friends" in the Shadow Thieves guild came looking for him and drove him into hiding.)
- "One of the missing elves, Shynlar Draal, was an Agent of the Eye, one of the Xanathar's spies. The Xanathar's underlings have been quietly searching for him." (True.)

Once the characters obtain information from three or more rumors, they attract the attention of the Xanathar and its agents. Proceed with event 3.

Event 3: Squid Pro Quo

Roleplaying Encounter

The characters' interference in the activities of the Unyielding Sword and their subsequent investigation into the elves' disappearances does not go unnoticed. Agents of the Xanathar—Waterdeep's nefarious beholder crime lord—recently tracked Eldeth Zanderraum, the flameskull leader of the Unyielding Sword, to Lanador's secret lair in hopes of finding Shynlar Draal, one of their number who was abducted. The Xanathar, who oversees a vast slaving operation based in and around Skullport, doesn't like competition. Believing that Lanador is in league with the rival Shadow Thieves guild, the beholder has decided to send adventurers to Lanador's lair to retrieve Shynlar and eliminate the upstart slaver.

The characters have drawn attention to themselves by gathering information about Lanador and the kidnappings. As a result, an Agent of the Eye named Squid approaches them in a public place.

When Squid appears, read:

A well-groomed elf dressed in brightly colored clothing walks toward you with a swagger that conveys a sense of confidence and whimsy.

"Greetings, adventurers! I heard from a friend on the Watch that you had a run-in with some would-be kidnappers and overcame them quite handily. Well done! Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Squid."

Any character who succeeds at a moderate Streetwise check knows of Squid. He has a reputation as a pompous and frivolous gambler, and he knows all the latest gossip and rumors in Waterdeep. A hard Streetwise check reveals that he has several shady friends and acquaintances, but no known public affiliations.

In addition to the material presented below, Squid knows all the information in the "Rumors" section of event 2, which he's glad to share over the course of this conversation.

If Squid is permitted to continue, read:

"I've heard that you're searching for leads. Maybe it's a noble pursuit, or maybe you're doing it for the money—it doesn't matter, does it? I'm just glad to hear someone with real skill is getting involved. Given what I've heard about you, I'm sure the reward is as good as yours!

"I have a friend who is likewise concerned about these kidnappings and wants to offer you some assistance. He is reclusive, yet extremely generous. I believe if you are successful, he'll sweeten the reward. Will you meet with him? It won't take long, and you really have nothing to lose."

If pressed for the name of his concerned friend, Squid offers the false name "Lord Greypeaks," though a hard Insight check verifies that he plucked this name out of thin air to protect his friend's identity. A moderate Intimidate check compels Squid to admit under duress that he lost "some small number of coins" to Lord Greypeaks some months ago at the Lucky Mermaid, a Waterdhavian gambling house that entertains all manner of clientele. This claim is false, as a hard Insight check can confirm.

If the characters agree to a meeting with Squid's friend, the elf leads them to the Lamp Street Orphanage in the city's North Ward. (Squid claims that his mysterious friend supports the orphanage financially, although this too is a lie that can be ascertained with a hard Insight check.) If the characters seem interested in Squid's offer but ask for time before meeting with his friend, he suggests they gather at the orphanage in one hour. If the characters don't show, Squid informs his friend that they're not interested.

The characters might see through Squid's lies and threaten him, in which case his cheery demeanor fades away, and he admits with deadly earnestness that he's been sent by "the Eye" to arrange a peaceful meeting between the characters and the beholder

THE XANATHAR

Once the characters learn of the Xanathar's involvement, they can make History checks or Streetwise checks to learn the following information about the nefarious beholder crime lord.

DC 12: The Xanathar, also known to its employees as the Eye, is Waterdeep's most notorious and powerful beholder crime lord. The Eye's agents in the city proper are known as the Xanathar's Guild, while those based in Undermountain are referred to as Agents of the Eye.

DC 16: The Xanathar controls a large fraction of Waterdeep's slave trade and is rivaled only by the Shadow Thieves in its quest for dominance of thieving operations in the City of Splendors. The Xanathar's Guild is believed to have safe houses throughout the sewers of Waterdeep, and Agents of the Eye are rumored to have a base in the subterranean criminal haven of Skullport.

DC 24: The Xanathar is paranoid and secretive, not prone to conducting face-to-face meetings with anyone outside its inner circle of loyal followers. However, rumor has it that the Eye employs spies to keep an eye on powerful adventurers, since they can be both troublesome and useful.

crime lord. If he fails in such a simple task, Squid suspects the Xanathar might kill him, and he's right.

Meeting with the Eye

Squid's goal is to arrange a meeting between the characters and the Xanathar, whom he refers to as "the Eye." If they see through his lies, Squid tells them his life is at stake because, as he puts it, the Eye doesn't look kindly on failure.

When the characters arrive, read:

A bleak, three-story gray stone building sits at the corner of Lamp Street and Andamaar's Street, its gargoyle-shaped rain spouts leering at you from the roofline. Stone steps climb to a set of black oak doors, next to which a mounted plaque reads "Lamp Street Orphanage." Beyond these doors are musty parlors with toys and stuffed animals scattered about, schoolrooms filled with bored children and old women giving lessons in spelling and arithmetic, and busy servants quietly flitting about like moths.

Squid leads you into a well-kept kitchen, produces a key, and unlocks a pantry door. He removes a lamp from one shelf, lights it, and takes you through a secret door in the back wall of the pantry and down a rough-hewn circular staircase to a dank and cluttered cellar. There, partially obscured by crates, barrels, cobwebs, and shadows, is a large, floating shape—dark, bulbous, spherical, and crowned with a nest of writhing eyestalks.

"Come forward," it grumbles in Common.

Squid tries to remain calm in the Eye's presence as he quietly urges the characters to control their violent tendencies.

If the characters approach the Eye, read:

The shape looming before you is not a creature of flesh and blood, but a shadowy projection. However, its likeness is unmistakable. All its eyes are upon you as it speaks.

"We have a common enemy."

The Xanathar has crafted a ritual that allows it to project a shadowy image of itself anywhere it has previously visited. This shadow form cannot attack but can be destroyed, although its destruction has no harmful effect on the Xanathar. The shadow form has 100 hit points, all defenses 25, and takes half damage from all attacks except those that deal radiant damage. The Xanathar can dispel it anytime it wants.

Allow the characters to question the Xanathar's shadowy effigy. The beholder answers their questions as succinctly as possible, and it does not reveal anything about itself or its organization. The Eye is interested only in talking about the matter at hand.

If the characters are willing to listen, read:

"The kidnappings were instigated by a disgraced Watch captain named Lanador. Ten years ago, he was arrested for taking bribes and for criminal conspiracy. After serving three years of his life sentence, he was released. Apparently, he helped local authorities catch some his former associates in the Shadow Thieves. After that, Lanador went into hiding. Assassins working for the Shadow Thieves in the city nearly caught up with him in Skullport shortly after his release, but Lanador slipped away. Since then, he's gone into hiding and turned to slavery for profit, using small mercenary companies like the Unyielding Sword to obtain slaves for interested buyers. The leader of the Unyielding Sword is Eldreth Zanderraum, a wizard in Skullport who was transformed into a flameskull. He and Lanador were seen together shortly before Lanador fled Skullport.

"One of my more reliable agents, an elf named Shynlar Draal, was kidnapped by the Unyielding Sword three days ago. It's unlikely they realize that Shynlar works for me, but if Lanador discovers that Shynlar is one of my agents, he will torture the elf for information. I cannot permit that to happen.

"Only I know the location of Lanador's secret lair. You'll be doing me and Waterdeep a favor by killing the upstart and putting an end to his slaving operation. With my help, you'll receive a fat reward. As an added incentive, for rescuing Shynlar Draal, I'll match any reward you collect from the Watch. One of my agents will arrange for an anonymous donation by a concerned citizen, and you can collect it directly from the Watch when you rescue the elves and deliver Lanador's body.

"I trust you find this arrangement agreeable?"

If the characters ask why Shynlar is important, the Xanathar states:
"All of my underlings are important. They are my eyes. Without them, I am blind."

Although non-evil characters might be disinclined to strike a deal with the beholder, they have little choice. Time is of the essence, and they cannot find Lanador's lair without the Xanathar's help.

The Xanathar is willing to negotiate the terms of the reward, but it refuses to give the characters anything up front. (The crime lord pays for results, not promises.) If the characters seem underwhelmed by the offer, the Xanathar promises them a 5,000 gp bonus for Shynlar's safe return, and not a bit more. The beholder is willing to entertain counteroffers that don't involve large sums of currency. For example, if the characters need the Xanathar's help with some other pressing matter, the beholder is willing to use his guild to help them, provided the security of the organization isn't likely to be compromised.

Threats have little power over the Xanathar. The Eye considers it foolish for anyone to question its superiority, and it won't be bullied by humanoids regardless of how powerful and capable they are.

If the characters threaten to expose the Xanathar, it laughs and says:
"Even if you lead the Watch to the orphanage, what makes you think I'll still be here or that they'd be able to find anything that would betray my whereabouts?"

As Squid can confirm, the Xanathar sponsors the orphanage under an alias. The place was chosen as a meeting spot because it has no connection to the beholder's various criminal enterprises.

The Xanathar's Plan

Once both sides come to terms, the Xanathar reveals its plan. If the beholder's shadowy effigy has been destroyed, Squid can relay the details.

When the characters are ready, read:
"Lanador's lair is underground, several miles outside Skullport and Undermountain. It used to be a smugglers' warehouse until Lanador killed its previous owners and fortified it. Once could waste years searching the maze of tunnels and never find it. Fortunately, you will have my eyeballs to guide you."

Floating out of the darkness come several orb-sized beholders. Each has a small central eye and four stumpy eyestalks.

The Xanathar's spectator beholderkin (one per character in the party) lead the adventurers to Lanador's lair. Each tiny beholder bonds to a particular character, acting as a familiar of sorts. Destroying a spectator has no effect on the Xanathar or the character to whom it's bonded, and the characters need only one of the creatures to lead them to Lanador's lair.

Each spectator confers the following benefits upon the character to which it's bonded, as long as the beholderkin and its bonded character are within 5 squares of each other:

- ✦ The character gains a +2 bonus to Perception checks.
- ✦ The character can read, speak, and understand Deep Speech.
- ✦ The character can, as a standard action, command his or her spectator (in Deep Speech) to use *eye ray* against a target of the character's choice.

In addition, these tiny beholders are affected by a ritual that allows the Xanathar to see through their eyes. (It cannot communicate through them, however.) The crime lord uses this benefit to spy on the party's progress. If all the spectators are destroyed, the Xanathar loses its ability to keep tabs on the characters.

The spectators aren't particularly bright and have no knowledge of the inner workings of the Xanathar's organization. Mostly they growl and hiss like angry cats and begrudgingly follow the characters' instructions.

Tactics: The spectators do not attack unless they are directly threatened or ordered to do so. They consider the adventurers their temporary masters and heed their commands. Left to its own devices, one floats within 5 squares of its master and does nothing.

Beholderkin, Spectator	**Level 9 Minion Artillery**
Tiny aberrant magical beast	XP 100
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +7	
AC 23, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21	**Perception** +9
Speed 0, fly 8 (hover)	All-around vision, darkvision
Traits	
All-Around Vision	
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the spectator.	
Standard Actions	
Eye Ray (varies) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 8 damage of a random type, determined by rolling a d4: 1—cold, 2—fire, 3—necrotic, 4—radiant.	
Str 1 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)	
Con 11 (+4) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 7 (+2)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Deep Speech	

After the beholderkin appear, the Xanathar continues:

"A fortified wall protects Lanador's compound, but a well-planned deception can neutralize it.

"Lanador loves a good fight and hires mercenaries to find worthy combatants for private death matches. He pays these mercenaries up to five hundred gold for each combatant depending on its size, condition, and race—the more exotic, the better. The guards at the entrance to Lanador's compound assess all the potential gladiators and pay accordingly. This is your best way to get them to open the gates.

"The guards will be suspicious of you, so you'll need to convince them that you're mercenaries . . . or merchandise. There's a fledgling mercenary company in Skullport called the Cave Trolls. Its leader is a drow malcontent named Gul'aanis. He's eager to make his mark, and I've arranged a meeting within him at Crookspar Parlor in Skullport. He'll be waiting for you there. I believe he can help you, and my beholderkin can see you there safely."

A character who succeeds on a hard Streetwise check has heard of the Cave Trolls and their reputation as ruffians and cutthroats, but not Gul'aanis himself.

Once the characters' meeting with the Xanathar is concluded, the shadowy form of the beholder crime lord vanishes. Squid opens a secret door in the orphanage cellar that leads to the sewers, ushers the characters through, and tells them that he'll be around if they need him. The best place to leave word for him is at the Lucky Mermaid gambling hall in Waterdeep. Squid then closes the secret door behind them, returns to street level, and goes on about his business. (Unfortunately for Squid, he's a security risk; the Xanathar's assassins dispose of him within a day of this encounter, and he's never seen again.)

If the party would rather skip the meeting with Gul'aanis and head to Lanador's lair on their own, neither Squid nor the Xanathar protests; skip event 4 and go directly to "Lanador's Lair." If the adventurers are inclined to hear what Gul'aanis has to offer, the Xanathar's spectators lead them safely to Skullport and into event 4.

Event 4: Skullport

Roleplaying Encounter

After their meeting with the Xanathar, the characters travel through the sewers of Waterdeep and the tunnels below to the subterranean haven of Skullport. As long as they have the Xanathar's spectators with them, the characters encounter no resistance from the malevolent inhabitants of the city's sewers.

Read:

The Xanathar's beholderkin lead you through the worst of Waterdeep's sewers without incident, eventually stopping before a section of wall that conceals a secret door. Beyond lies a network of rough-hewn tunnels and caves. Descending into darkness, you are closely watched by evil-looking creatures too frightened to approach. After you spend several hours meandering in the dark, a light appears ahead, accompanied by the sounds and smells of a wharf. Suddenly, the tunnel gives way to a breathtaking sight: a subterranean settlement illuminated by lanterns. Decrepit wooden buildings stand upon the shoulders of dilapidated stone structures clinging to the shores of a winding underground river. Cloaked figures creep along rickety scaffolds and rope bridges that cling to the buildings like webs.

Although many structures catch your eye, none is more impressive than a large, round, copper-domed structure with a commanding view of the black waterway. The beholderkin lead you toward it.

Skullport locals know better than to interfere in the Xanathar's business, and characters accompanied by one or more of the crime lord's beholderkin are left alone. If the characters insist on exploring more of the city before meeting with Gul'aanis at Crookspar Parlor, let them do so. They'll quickly learn that their affiliation with the Xanathar affords them no special favors or free information.

Crookspar Parlor

This is Skullport's finest gambling hall. A lot of money flows through Crookspar Parlor every day, and no one in his or her right mind is eager to pick a fight here and interrupt the flow of coins. Violence and vendettas have no business at the Crookspar.

Gul'aanis, the drow leader of the Cave Trolls, comes to Crookspar Parlor to spend his hard-won money. He's a sly gambler and can easily double or triple his earnings after a few days at the parlor's card tables.

When the characters enter Crookspar Parlor, read:

The Xanathar's beholderkin lead you into a crowded establishment that reeks of sweat and ale, where scoundrels rob each other with playing cards instead of knives and villains conspire in dark alcoves. Kobolds deliver drinks to impatient patrons who eye you warily but keep their distance.

You follow the Xanathar's floating eyes to a crowd of spectators surrounding a sunken area in the middle of the gambling parlor. Pushing your way through the crowd, you see six sullen figures seated around a table covered with small mounds of coins. As cards are dealt, they watch each other closely. One of them—a battle-scarred drow wearing leather and a cloak adorned with a star-shaped black web—spots you out of the corner of his eye, folds, and removes himself from the table while a kobold servant climbs onto his chair and brushes his winnings into a sack.

In private conversation, the drow doesn't mince words. "I'm Gul'aanis," he says, "and you're late."

Gul'aanis was a soldier sworn to serve House Oblodra, a powerful drow house, but his female superiors never showed him much favor. Eventually, he tired of the incessant whippings, faked his death, and struck out on his own. His adventures brought him

SKULLPORT
Lair of the Cave Trolls
Crookspar Parlor
To Lanador's Lair
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to Skullport. He believes he can better serve Lolth as a mercenary, and a short time ago he founded a gang called the Cave Trolls. Like many Skullport gangs, they specialize in kidnapping and murder, but no assignment is beneath them.

Gul'aanis and Company

Gul'aanis has knowingly and unknowingly done some business for the Agents of the Eye in the past, and the Xanathar pays well. Earning the beholder's respect can only help his organization, and so the drow is willing to help the adventurers accomplish their quest despite any personal misgivings he might have about their character and intentions.

Gul'aanis is evil and has an inbred hatred of elves, but he doesn't allow his personal feelings to interfere with his business. Given a choice of targets, however, he attacks elves first.

Although Gul'aanis is by himself in Crookspar Parlor, he keeps a crew of four ogre mercenaries hidden in nearby buildings. Gul'aanis doesn't speak Giant, but he has taught the ogres to interpret various whistles and hand gestures. If the characters insist on aggression, improvise a tavern map that leads out to the scaffolded walkways for an exciting, cinematic combat.

Drow Swashbuckler **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Medium fey humanoid, drow XP 300

HP 81; **Bloodied** 40 **Initiative** +10
AC 21, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19 **Perception** +9
Speed 6 Darkvision

Standard Actions

Nimble Slash ✦ At-Will
Effect: The drow shifts up to 3 squares before or after the attack.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage.

Blade Flourish ✦ Encounter
Effect: The drow uses *nimble slash* twice, then gains a +2 power bonus to AC until the start of its next turn.

Minor Actions

Cloud of Darkness (zone) **✦ Encounter**
Effect: Close burst 1. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the drow's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the drow. While entirely within the zone, any creature other than the drow is blinded.

Triggered Actions

Unbalanced Counterattack ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An adjacent enemy hits the drow with a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The drow uses *nimble slash* against the triggering enemy. On a hit, the enemy grants combat advantage until the end of the drow's next turn. On a miss, the drow grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +10, Bluff +13, Stealth +13

Str 15 (+5)	**Dex** 21 (+8)	**Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 17 (+6)	**Int** 17 (+6)	**Cha** 20 (+8)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, short sword

4 Ogre Mercenaries **Level 8 Soldier**
Large natural humanoid (giant) XP 350 each

HP 93; **Bloodied** 46 **Initiative** +8
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19 **Perception** +6
Speed 8

Standard Actions

Morningstar (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage.
Effect: The ogre marks the target until the end of the ogre's next turn.

Handaxe (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage.

Brutal Sweep (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone.

Str 22 (+10)	**Dex** 15 (+6)	**Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 21 (+9)	**Int** 7 (+2)	**Cha** 8 (+3)

Alignment evil **Languages** Giant
Equipment morningstar, 2 handaxes

Tactics: Gul'aanis doesn't like to fight battles he can't win. If the characters mistreat him, he tries to lure them outside onto the rickety scaffolds and catwalks leading away from Crookspar Parlor. There, he leaps from one scaffold to another (moderate Acrobatics check) and then whistles to summon his ogre mercenaries. Gul'aanis joins them in combat until he becomes bloodied, at which point he uses the ogres to cover his escape. The ogres fight to the death.

Treasure: Gul'aanis's gambling winnings amount to 750 gp, which he carries around in a small sack.

Lair of the Cave Trolls

Assuming the characters are willing to work with Gul'aanis, he takes them to a rundown building that serves as the lair of the Cave Trolls. His ogre companions lumber along behind, watching Gul'aanis's back.

Read:

The drow leads you and his ogre companions down the creaking streets of Skullport, past buildings fashioned from salvaged ships and junk, to a ramshackle house perched on rickety stilts above a slum of leaning shanties.

Gul'aanis orders the ogres to stand guard outside while he leads you indoors. The drow's lair contains nothing but shattered furnishings and rats. The roof and floor are pockmarked with holes where the wood has rotted completely away. Jagged shards of glass cling to empty window frames, and a fat stirge flutters amid the rafters.

Half expecting an ambush, you are hardly surprised when six dark shapes with swords emerge from secret doors along the graffiti-covered walls. Gul'aanis raises a hand, and the shapes lower their weapons.

The shadowy figures are low-ranking members of the Cave Trolls, tasked with guarding the lair. They do not attack unless Gul'aanis gives the order.

Although his lair doesn't look like much, Gul'aanis has modified the house to contain a number of secret rooms where the mercenaries hide their supplies. The drow is willing to provide any of the following resources to help the characters complete their quest:

- **Disguises:** Members of the Cave Trolls wear dark cloaks adorned with the company's symbol: a black web shaped like an eight-pointed star, traced with gold. If the characters want to disguise themselves as mercenaries, Gul'aanis has five cloaks he can spare.
- **Trick Manacles:** Gul'aanis suggests that anyone playing the part of a slave should be unarmed and bound with manacles at wrists and ankles. He can modify the manacles so that characters can free themselves as a minor action.
- **Armed Escorts:** Gul'aanis is willing to assemble a squad of six Cave Trolls to accompany the characters. Use the Skullport mercenary stat block below for these armed escorts. The mercenaries' names are Erisko Shadowvain, Ruldar Taun, Jardek Orlskar, Sorall Hawkfeather, Grynna Gondalim, and Tessimyr Grayfall.

6 Skullport Mercenaries **Level 7 Minion Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 300 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +7
AC 23, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
Speed 8

Standard Actions

⊕ **Morningstar** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 6 damage.
Effect: The mercenary marks the target until the end of the mercenary's next turn.

↗ **Net** (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +10 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is immobilized (escape DC 16).

Str 17 (+6)	**Dex** 15 (+5)	**Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 14 (+5)	**Int** 11 (+3)	**Cha** 10 (+3)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment chainmail, morningstar, net

Tactics: If the characters turn on the Cave Trolls, Gul'aanis attempts to flee through a secret door while the minions cover his escape.

Treasure: The Cave Trolls' lair contains stolen crates of food, kegs of water and ale, and other basic supplies. Any character who succeeds on a hard Perception check while searching the house also finds a hidden pouch containing 2d20 gp.

Lanador's Lair

Lanador's lair is an old smugglers' warehouse hidden in a quiet cavern off the beaten path, about 5 miles outside Skullport. Although it's easy to get lost in the maze of tunnels between Skullport and Lanador's lair, the Xanathar's beholderkin have no trouble finding their way.

A curtain wall and gatehouse (area 1) blocks the entrance to Lanador's cavern. The characters must either sneak their way past it, trick the guards into letting them inside, or fight their way through it.

Beyond the gatehouse is a damp, mushroom-filled cavern (area 2) overlooking an underground river. Lanador has modified the stone warehouse, adding a slave prison (area 3). However, part of the warehouse still serves its original purpose (area 4), storing provisions and other supplies necessary for survival in the Underdark.

Lanador employs minotaurs as guards and is currently entertaining several members of the Unyielding Sword. He's also awaiting the arrival of a drow wizard for whom he has gathered elf slaves.

1. Outer Wall

Combat Encounter Level 8 (1,900 XP)

To reach Lanador and rescue the slaves, the adventurers must find a way past the protective outer wall.

Light: *Everburning torches* keep the wall, gates, guard towers, and cavern entrances brightly lit.

Monsters: 8 gray company recruits, 2 human transmuters, 2 minotaur soldiers. The archers are spaced out atop the parapet (area 1D) and have partial cover against attacks from the ground. At the start of the encounter, one transmuter and one minotaur occupy each gatehouse (areas 1B and 1C).

Lanador's Lair
Upper Level
N
W
E
S
4A
4A
2C
2B
2B
3A
2A
1B
1C
1A
Start Area
4B
4C
3I
3C
3H
3B
3E
3F
3D
3G
3C
Lower Level
1D
Gatehouse Parapet

When the characters enter the cavern, read:
The tunnel opens into a 50-foot-high cavern that echoes with the sound of rushing water. A 15-foot-high stone wall with spiked battlements bisects the cavern entrance and is illuminated by torches. Set into the middle of the wall is a pair of iron doors. Evenly spaced along the top of the wall are several human guards with shortbows. Some distance beyond the wall looms a large stone building—Lanador's lair, no doubt.

If the characters take no steps to conceal their approach, the recruits instruct them to keep their weapons sheathed, but they do not attack right away. They alert the transmuters, who are interested in hearing what the characters have to say.

Entering the Compound

The transmuters. a brother-sister team named Tantrus and Seviria Malderos, emerge from their towers and converse with the party through narrow window slits in the iron doors, with their minotaur protectors standing behind them. If they like what the characters have to offer, the transmuters command the minotaurs to open the barred doors and allow the party inside. If not, the transmuters order the recruits to attack and command the minotaurs to guard their backs while they cast spells through the window slits.

If the characters try to bluff their way into the slavers' compound, allow for some amount of role-playing, and then have them make a group Bluff check (moderate DC). Apply any of the following modifiers to each character's check as appropriate:

BLUFF CHECK MODIFIERS

Circumstance	Modifier
Dressed as Cave Trolls	+1
Disguised and shackled as slave	+1
Party has Cave Troll escort	+2
Visible beholderkin present	-2

DOORS IN LANADOR'S LAIR

Lanador has replaced or reinforced many of the doors in his compound. Unless otherwise noted, use these statistics for portals in his lair.

Iron Door: AC and Fortitude 25, Reflex 5, Will –; 80 hit points; resist 5 to all damage; DC 25 Strength check to break.

Reinforced Iron Door: AC and Fortitude 25, Reflex 5, Will –; 100 hit points; resist 10 to all damage; DC 30 Strength check to break.

If the group Bluff check fails, the transmuters doubt the characters' intentions and instruct the party to leave at once. If the characters refuse to do so, the wall's defenders attack.

If the Bluff check succeeds, the transmuters are satisfied that the characters are here to conduct a business transaction, and they allow the party to pass through the iron doors. However, once the characters are inside the compound, the transmuters command the minotaurs to inspect any characters disguised as slaves and check their manacles. The minotaurs must succeed on a hard Perception check to spot the trick manacles. If they do, they shout, "It's a trick!" At that point, the jig is up, and the wall's defenders attack.

The transmuters keep money and gems (which they use to pay for slaves) hidden in the gatehouse towers. They have a total of 2,500 gp in mixed gold and platinum pieces, plus 1,000 gp in gems. They are willing to pay up to 500 gp for a slave, with weaker specimens fetching as little as 200 gp.

Entering the compound is one thing, and gaining an audience with Lanador is quite another. The transmuters adamantly refuse any such requests, saying that Lanador has more important matters to attend to, and they insist on taking any slaves into their custody. Slaves left in their care are taken by the minotaurs to Grody, Lanador's right-hand man, in area 3A.

Area 1 Details

1A. Reinforced Iron Doors: An iron crossbar secures these doors from the inside. A small, shuttered window slit is set into each door at a human's eye level; the transmuters use these slits when speaking with visitors. The shutters can be opened only from the north side.

1B. Western Gatehouse: A simple, unlocked wooden door bars entry to this cramped room lit by *everburning torches*. Six cots and a locked chest are arranged about the chamber. Tantrus Malderos carries a key to the chest, which can also be opened with a hard Thievery check or a moderate Strength check.

Treasure: The locked chest contains 500 gp in a sack, a telescoping spyglass worth 100 gp, ten 100 gp gems in a silk pouch, and enough rations to feed six people for a week.

1C. Eastern Gatehouse: This tower is furnished similarly to the west tower and also has a shabby rug made from an otyugh's hide.

Treasure: The locked chest in this room (the key to which is held by Seviria Malderos) contains four rolled-up maps of Undermountain's first level, accurate and worth 25 gp each to an interested buyer, and enough rations to feed six people for a week, but no coins or gems. A small pouch concealed in the otyugh rug holds 20 pp.

1D. Parapet. The stairs leading up to the parapet are difficult terrain going up and normal terrain going down. The 15-foot-high wall is made of smooth, mortared stone and requires a hard Athletics check to climb without climbing gear. The battlements are lined with spikes and provide partial cover against attacks from below. Climbing over the spikes requires a moderate Acrobatics check; on a failed check, a character takes 1d6 damage.

8 Gray Company Recruits **Level 7 Minion Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Traits

Grim Solidarity
If the recruit starts its turn adjacent to a creature that has *grim solidarity*, the recruit can make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end.

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 6 damage.

Shortbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 6 damage.

Triggered Actions

Inspired Fervor ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Trigger: The recruit scores a critical hit against an enemy.
Effect (Free Action): The recruit makes a basic attack against the enemy, with a +2 power bonus to the attack roll.

Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment studded leather, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows

2 Human Transmuters **Level 7 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid XP 300 each

HP 77; **Bloodied** 38 **Initiative** +3
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20 **Perception** +11
Speed 6

Standard Actions

Staff (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.

Beast Curse (implement, polymorph) ✦ **Recharge** ⚃ ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Ranged 5 (one hexed enemy); +10 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The transmuter alters the target's physical form to appear as a Tiny animal until the end of the transmuter's next turn. While in this form, the target cannot use powers or make attacks.

Capricious Earth (charm, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 2 within 5 (enemies in the burst); +10 vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage, and the transmuter slides the target up to 3 squares.
Miss: The transmuter can slide the target 1 square.

Move Actions

Hex Jump (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: Close burst 5 (one hexed creature in the burst). The transmuter and the target teleport, swapping positions.

Minor Actions

Hex (charm, implement) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Close burst 5 (one enemy in the burst); +10 vs. Will
Hit: The target is hexed until the end of the transmuter's next turn. While hexed, the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and damage rolls against the transmuter.

Skills Arcana +10, Nature +11
Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 17 (+6)
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 15 (+5) **Cha** 14 (+5)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment robes, staff implement

2 Minotaur Soldiers **Level 8 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 350 each

HP 89; **Bloodied** 44 **Initiative** +8
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19 **Perception** +11
Speed 8

Standard Actions

Battleaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 8 damage, and the minotaur uses *shield bash* against the same target.

Minor Actions

Shield Bash ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Requirement: The minotaur must be using a shield.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 damage, and the target falls prone.

Triggered Actions

Goring Toss ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the minotaur shifts.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 1 (triggering enemy); +11 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, the target is immobilized until the end of its turn, and the minotaur slides the target up to 2 squares to a square adjacent to the minotaur.

Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 13 (+5)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment heavy shield, battleaxe

Tactics

Gray Company Recruits: The archers remain atop the wall, taking advantage of the partial cover while peppering enemies with arrows.

Human Transmuters: These spellcasters use *hex* every round, followed by *beast curse*. When *beast curse* is unavailable, they use *capricious earth*. They also use *capricious earth* to knock enemies off the wall. If cornered, they use *hex jump* to extricate themselves and aren't afraid to teleport atop the wall.

Minotaur Soldiers: The minotaurs protect the transmuters. If in the course of defending their charges they are lured atop the wall, they use *goring toss* to knock enemies over the wall.

Further Developments

The archers and the Malderos siblings are members of the Unyielding Sword, and all of them have the mercenary company's symbol (a short sword on a five-pointed star) tattooed on their arms. If the characters defeat them and take prisoners, they can, with a moderate Intimidate check, persuade their prisoners to divulge the following information.

- Eldeth Zanderraum, the flameskull leader of the Unyielding Sword, is probably with Lanador in the warehouse (area 4). A shipment of provisions arrived yesterday by boat, and Lanador likes to manage the inventory himself.
- The elf slaves are confined to cells in Lanador's prison (area 3G). Lanador plans to sell them to a drow who is expected to arrive by boat. Only Lanador knows when the drow will show.
- Lanador's lieutenant, Grody, watches over the prisoners. He's a minotaur spellcaster.

Any members of the Cave Trolls who survive the encounter offer to guard prisoners while the characters press the attack against Lanador, but they are unwilling to advance deeper into the compound. If the characters have no further need of them, they return to Skullport without so much as a goodbye.

Sounds of combat here alert the two guards in area 2A. They enter the main building and alert the inhabitants of the slave prison (area 3) and the warehouse (area 4). No reinforcements are sent to help defend the wall, however. Consequently, the characters have time to take a short rest after this encounter.

2. Cavern

Combat Encounter Level 6 (1,400 XP)

Offal from various Underdark critters has given rise to a forest of enormous mushrooms. Within this forest, Lanador has cultivated a number of fragile shriekers—mushrooms that scream when non-plant creatures approach them. He uses them as an alarm system, but the noise also lures wandering predators.

Light: Dim (bioluminescent fungi).

Monsters: 2 human thugs, 5 fragile shriekers, 4 death husk stirges.

As the characters explore the cavern, read:

The 20-foot-tall stone building that dominates this cavern is set with a pair of iron doors. West of it lies a splendid forest of multicolored fungi growing atop mounds of offal. Some of the mushrooms are bioluminescent. Natural paths have formed through the forest, and beyond this fungal garden you hear the reverberating echoes of an underground river.

The cavern ceiling is 50 feet high and dotted with small stalactites. The walls have abundant handholds but are damp; they can be climbed with a moderate Athletics check.

Area 2 Details

2A. Prison Entrance (Iron Doors). The entrance to Lanador's slave prison is blocked by a heavy set of iron doors. The doors are unlocked but require an easy Athletics check to push open due to their sheer weight.

Standing in front of the doors are two human thugs, members of the Unyielding Sword. At the first sign of trouble, they retreat to area 3A and close the doors behind them.

2B. Mushroom Forest. This forest is home to several species of harmless fungi, as well as five fragile shriekers. The location of each shrieker is marked with an X on the map. Whenever a non-plant creature ends its movement within 5 squares of a fragile shrieker, it screams. The sound is loud enough to alert the creatures in areas 1, 3, and 4, although they do not investigate the disturbance.

The second time the characters disturb a shrieker, four death husk stirges hanging from the cavern's 50-foot-high ceiling descend to investigate. The undead stirges fight until slain; they ignore the shriekers but are not immune to the shriekers' close burst attacks.

2C. Ledge. At this point, the floor of the cavern drops 20 feet to a rocky beach that hugs the shore of a 100-foot-wide, 20-foot-deep underground river. From this overlook, characters can see the old smugglers' warehouse (area 4A–B) and the sturdy stone dock surrounding it (area 4C). They can also see a rusty iron door set into the cliff face directly below them (area 3I).

Scaling the ledge requires a moderate Athletics check.

2 Human Thugs	**Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +5	
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	
Traits	
Rush into Battle	
Whenever the thug hits a creature with a charge attack, the target grants combat advantage until the end of the thug's next turn.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Club** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 damage.	
Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+4)	
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment club	

5 Fragile Shriekers **Level 5 Minion Lurker**
Medium natural beast (blind, plant) XP 50 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +3
AC 19, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 18 **Perception** +2
Speed 1 Blindsight 5
Immune blinded, charm, gaze, illusion, poison

Traits

Plant Form
Until the shrieker takes an action, a creature must succeed on a DC 22 Dungeoneering check to recognize the shrieker as a creature.

Standard Actions

Piercing Shriek (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close burst 2 (nonplant creatures in the burst); +8 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3 thunder damage.

Triggered Actions

Shriek ✦ **At-Will** (1/turn)
Trigger: A creature without the plant keyword ends its turn within 5 squares of the shrieker.
Effect (Free Action): The shrieker emits a loud shriek that can be heard by all nondeafened creatures within 20 squares of it.

Str 4 (-1) **Dex** 5 (-1) **Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 1 (-3) **Cha** 1 (-3)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

4 Death Husk Stirges **Level 6 Skirmisher**
Small natural animate (undead) XP 250 each

HP 71; **Bloodied** 35 **Initiative** +9
AC 19, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 18 **Perception** +6
Speed 2, fly 6 Darkvision
Immune poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Traits

Necromantic Flyer
A death husk stirge that takes radiant damage cannot fly until the end of its next turn; if in the air, it falls.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage, and the death husk stirge recharges *rotted blood*.

Rotted Blood (necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close blast 3 (living creatures in the blast); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the stirge's next turn.
Effect: Undead in the blast can shift up to 2 squares as a free action.

Standard Actions

Nimble Wing ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The death husk stirge flies 4 squares. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Triggered Actions

Necrotic Miasma (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The death husk stirge drops to 0 hit points.
Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (living creatures in the burst); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 5 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened until the end of its next turn.

Str 6 (+1) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+6)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 4 (0) **Cha** 7 (+1)

Alignment evil **Languages** –

Tactics

Human Thugs: The thugs retreat to area 3A at the first sign of trouble. If unable to flee, they bash enemies with their clubs. They have the same information as the guards in area 1.

Fragile Shriekers: The shriekers attack characters and stirges alike until destroyed or until they sense no enemies within 5 squares of them.

Death Husk Stirges: The stirges use *rotted blood* as often as possible and *bite* on the "off rounds." They use *nimble wing* to avoid taking opportunity attacks when they move, and when they die, they release a foul *necrotic miasma*.

3. Slave Prison

Combat Encounter Level 7 (1,700 XP)

The elves kidnapped from Waterdeep are imprisoned here, along with a number of slaves that Lanador pits against one another in death matches for his own amusement. The prison is overseen by a minotaur magus named Grody and several members of the Unyielding Sword mercenary company.

Light: Dangling oil lanterns cast bright light in all areas except the cells in area 3G, which are dark.

Monsters: Minotaur magus (Grody), 8 gray company recruits, 2 human slavers, 2 human thugs (from area 2A). The minotaur magus stands between the slave pits (area 3B). A recruit stands watch next to each pit, and the remaining four recruits are evenly spaced around the balcony (area 3A). If an alarm has sounded, the human slavers are here as well; otherwise, they're whipping a dwarf prisoner in the torture chamber (area 3F). If the two thugs in area 2A managed to flee, they're on the balcony, flanking the double doors that lead to the cavern outside.

Other Creatures: Various prisoners (see "Lanador's Prisoners").

When the characters enter area 3A or 3B, read:
A 15-foot-high stone balcony overlooks a large chamber that has iron chains dangling from four rusted pulleys attached to the ceiling. The chains are attached to hinged gates covering four filthy pits set into the floor.

A minotaur wearing robes stands between the covered pits, jabbing at prisoners through the bars with his long glaive. Eight human archers stand around the pits and along the balcony, watching the minotaur's back.

If the alarm has not been sounded, add:
A whip crack can be heard through one of many iron doors on the ground level, followed closely by a scream.

If the alarm has been sounded, add:
Two sweaty, muscular men wearing blood-spattered leather armor and armed with scourges drag a prisoner into the room and throw him to the floor. The prisoner, a dwarf, has been whipped nearly to death.

The minotaur turns to you and chuckles. "What do we have here? More grist for the death matches? Excellent. Surrender, or the dwarf dies."

If the characters gain surprise, the minotaur magus doesn't have time to summon the two slavers and their prisoner from the torture chamber (area 3F). However, the two slavers are quick to join a battle in progress, leaving their prisoner behind.

The minotaur, Groadikus (or "Grody," as Lanador calls him), runs the prison. He hopes that threatening one of Lanador's prisoners might force the characters to surrender. If the characters do not do as he commands, Grody orders the human slavers to execute the dwarf. The dwarf, who has 1 hit point remaining, is an easy kill.

Area 3 Details

3A. Stone Balcony. This balcony is 15 feet high. Stone stairs lead down to the lower level (area 3B); they are difficult terrain going up, and normal terrain going down. A 3-foot-tall stone railing around the balcony guards against accidental falls.

DEATH MATCH CONTESTANTS

Each slave pit in area 3B holds a single creature that has the will to fight if released. The prisoners include a ravenous ghoul, a gnoll gorger named Skrunt, an unarmed orc rampager named Zolga, and a troglodyte thrasher named Pessk (all from *Monster Vault*™). All four have hit points equal to their bloodied values. Only Pessk can be persuaded to fight on the party's side—but that alliance ends once the troglodyte wins its freedom.

Killing a trapped prisoner earns no XP, though freeing and then killing a bloodied prisoner might earn half the normal award, at your discretion. Experience gained by defeating these monsters is not included in the total XP for this encounter.

3B. Slave Pits. These pits are where Lanador holds his death matches, and the rules are simple: Two prisoners enter, one prisoner leaves. Sometimes the prisoners fight unarmed, and sometimes they're given weapons from the armories (area 3C).

The iron gates covering the pits can be opened by pulling on chains looped around pulleys attached to the ceiling. Lifing a gate requires a standard action and a moderate Strength check. A Small creature can slip between the bars with a hard Acrobatics check.

The pits are 10 feet deep and covered with slippery mildew, making the walls difficult to climb (hard Athletics check). The gates covering the pits can be lifted from within, but only by creatures that have leverage. An ogre, for instance, would be big enough to push against the floor. A character standing on the backs of other prisoners could also make the attempt.

See the "Death Match Contestants" sidebar for information on the pits' current inhabitants.

Iron Doors: All the doors are made of iron with built-in locks. Only the double doors leading to the prison cellblock (area 3G) and the second floor of the warehouse (area 4A) are currently locked. Lanador and Grody carry the keys, and each door can also be unlocked with a hard Thievery check. The double doors leading to the cellblock can be opened from the west side by pulling a heavy iron lever set into the floor nearby.

Empty Crates: Empty crates that count as blocking terrain are stacked against the walls. A typical crate has AC, Fortitude, and Reflex 5, and 20 hit points.

3C. Armories. Lanador collects old weapons, stores them here, and gives them to prisoners during death matches. All sorts of weapons can be found here, mounted on the walls and tossed upon the floor. There are also a few shields as well, but they are battered and misshapen.

3D. Grody's Room. When he's not tormenting prisoners, the minotaur magus resides here. A large pile of straw serves as Grody's bed, an open crate holds his personal food supply (rotten meat), and a shrine to the demon lord Baphomet dominates the south wall. The shrine consists of a blood-stained altar made of bones and stretched flesh below a stitched-hide tapestry painted with a crude image of the Horned King. Lit candles made of fat rendered from slain prisoners surround the altar.

Treasure: Grody keeps a tinderbox, a sack of 750 gp, and a level 8 common or uncommon magic item hidden in the altar. Anyone searching the altar finds the treasure.

3E. Mercenaries' Room. This room contains ten ill-kept beds for members of the Unyielding Sword. Two of the beds (the ones belonging to the slavers) are nicer than the rest, and a locked chest sits at the foot of each one. Each slaver carries the key to his

own chest. Opening a chest without its key requires a moderate Strength check or a hard Thievery check.

Treasure: One locked chest contains various instruments of torture, a pouch holding 50 gp, and a *potion of healing*. The other contains more instruments, a crystal-bladed knife worth 500 gp, and a bundle of warm letters from "Mom."

3F. Torture Chamber. Grody and the slavers like to beat and torture their prisoners into submission using a variety of instruments, including a rack, a spiked chair, whips, and scourges. Prisoners can be shackled to the walls or dangled from ceiling hooks like slabs of meat.

One such victim, a dwarf named Qualf Grizzlebeard (see "Lanador's Prisoners"), wears manacles on his wrists and dangles from a ceiling hook. The human slavers have been whipping him for refusing to eat prison food.

3G. Cellblock. Lanador's prisoners are kept in separate cells and left to wallow in their filth. Captured characters are also detained here until Lanador sees fit to interrogate them or pit them against other prisoners in death matches.

Reinforced Iron Doors: The doors to the cells are made of reinforced iron and locked from the outside. Lanador and Grody carry keys to the cell doors, which can also be opened with a hard Thievery check.

3H. Lanador's Room. Lanador has little to show for his life of crime. Most of his money goes toward keeping his underlings happy and his operation afloat, although he does keep a secret stash for emergencies. His room contains a well-made bed, its firm mattress draped with owlbear hide. Above the bed hangs a shield depicting the crest of Waterdeep (a memento from his days as a Watch captain) crossed with two longswords. Other furnishings include a table arrayed with Lanador's assortment of fine melee weapons (1,000 gp for the lot), a large seafarer's trunk containing several well-kept pairs of boots, another trunk packed with clothing, and a stuffed gray wolf.

Treasure: Hidden inside the stuffed wolf are 10 pieces of jewelry worth 200 gp each, a *potion of healing*, and a level 9 common or uncommon magic item. Any character who cuts into the wolf's stuffed carcass finds the hidden trove.

3I. Tunnel (Iron Door). This tunnel connects Lanador's room to the shore of the underground river. The door at either end is made of sturdy iron and locked, and Lanador carries the only key.

Minotaur Magus **Level 9 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 400

HP 96; **Bloodied** 48 **Initiative** +5
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 23 **Perception** +12
Speed 6

Traits

☼ **Unleash the Beast Within** ✦ **Aura** 3
An ally that starts its turn in the aura gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls on attacks made as part of charges until the end of that ally's turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Glaive** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 10 damage, and the minotaur slides the target up to 2 squares.
Miss: The magus slides the target 1 square.

⊛ **Baphomet's Rage** (charm, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. Will
Hit: 1d6 + 4 psychic damage, and the target uses a free action to charge a creature of the magus's choosing.

↣ **Crimson Bolt** (fire, lightning) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 5 lightning damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 fire damage and cannot shift (save ends both).

Triggered Actions

↯ **Goring Fling** ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the magus deals damage to the magus.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (triggering enemy); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the magus pushes the target up to 3 squares.

Skills Bluff +14, Insight +12
Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 16 (+7)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 15 (+6) **Cha** 20 (+9)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Equipment glaive

8 Gray Company Recruits **Level 7 Minion Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Traits

Grim Solidarity
If the recruit starts its turn adjacent to a creature that has *grim solidarity*, the recruit can make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 6 damage.

⊛ **Shortbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 6 damage.

Triggered Actions

↯ ↣ **Inspired Fervor** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Trigger: The recruit scores a critical hit against an enemy.
Effect (Free Action): The recruit makes a basic attack against the enemy, with a +2 power bonus to the attack roll.

Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment studded leather, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows

2 Human Slavers	Level 8 Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 350 each
HP 102; **Bloodied** 51	**Initiative** +7
AC 20, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Thump and Lash** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 6 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to melee attack rolls until the end of its next turn.	
⸸ **Slaver's Tangle** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Requirement: The slaver must be using this power with a scourge.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 6 damage, and the target is immobilized and takes a -2 penalty to melee attack rolls until the end of its next turn.	
Skills Intimidate +11	
Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)	
Con 12 (+5) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 14 (+6)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment leather armor, mace, scourge	

Tactics

Grody: The minotaur magus prefers making ranged attacks but doesn't shy away from melee. He commands the slavers or archers to open the gates to one or more of the slave pits, and then uses *glaive* or *goring fling* to knock enemies into them.

Human Slavers: The slavers are sadists who enjoy inflicting harm on others, but they are cowards and retreat to area 4B when bloodied, hoping Lanador can protect them.

Gray Company Recruits: The archers attempt to form a perimeter around the group, keeping their enemies clustered toward the center of the chamber.

Human Thugs (from area 2A): The thugs flank the double doors leading to the cavern and attack enemies who step through.

Lanador's Prisoners

The slavers have a dwarf prisoner (Qualf) in their custody, in either area 3B or area 3F. Twelve more prisoners are kept under lock and key in the cellblock in area 3G. Unless noted otherwise, all prisoners are minions with 1 hit point, all defenses 15, and no effective attacks. A prisoner is slowed until his or her shackles are removed (hard Strength check or moderate Thievery check).

The thirteen prisoners are briefly described below.

- Qualf Grizzlebeard (unaligned male dwarf), a barfly in Skullport who feeds information on criminal activities to the Gray Hands (a benevolent organization sworn to protect Waterdeep).
- Shynlar Draal (evil male elf), a loyal Agent of the Eye captured in Skullport while trying to find information on Lanador's whereabouts. His statistics are presented below, and he currently has hit points equal to his bloodied value.
- Resme Dannith (good female elf), an employee of Meiroth's Fine Silks in Waterdeep.
- Alisia Silverdawn (good female elf), a barmaid from the Unicorn's Horn, a reputable Waterdhavian inn.
- Felaar Tanil (unaligned male elf), a poet.
- Iyan Dalarandar (good male elf), a gardener employed by the Irlingstar noble family in Waterdeep.
- Avaline Vraemaril (good female elf), an attendant who worked at the Mystra's Arms asylum in Waterdeep.
- Ethara Shadowstep (unaligned female elf), bosun of the *Moon's Wake*, an Tethyrian merchant caravel. There's a 100 gp reward for information on her whereabouts.
- Ra Livalien (good male elf), a solicitor from Silverymoon who was visiting friends in Waterdeep. There's a 500 gp reward for his safe return.
- Mharane Featherbone (unaligned female elf), an animal breeder and trainer for the Griffon Cavalry in Waterdeep.
- Hovark Krinshale (evil male half-orc), a monk employed by the Shadow Thieves to infiltrate the Unyielding Sword and get at Lanador. He pretends to be a Skullport fisherman who stumbled upon Lanador's lair by water. His statistics are presented below, but he currently has hit points equal to his bloodied value.

Agent of the Eye	Level 7 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300
HP 58; **Bloodied** 29	**Initiative** +5
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21	**Perception** +9
Speed 7	Darkvision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Aberrant Touch** (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 8 psychic damage.	
⊗ **Eye Ray** (varies) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: The agent uses a random *eye ray* power determined by rolling a d6. Using an *eye ray* does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
1-2. *Fire Ray* (fire): Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 fire damage.	
3-4. *Sleep Ray* (charm): Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target instead falls unconscious (save ends).	
5-6. *Disintegrate Ray*: Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Skills Insight +9, Stealth +10, Streetwise +11	
Str 11 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+4)	
Con 10 (+3) **Int** 14 (+5) **Cha** 17 (+6)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	

Half-Orc Monk	Level 6 Controller
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc	XP 250
HP 68; **Bloodied** 34	**Initiative** +7
AC 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17	**Perception** +5
Speed 7	Low-light vision
Traits	
Slow Fall	
The monk treats any fall as if it was 20 feet shorter and always lands on its feet.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Crippling Strike** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, or 3d6 + 6 if the target is granting combat advantage to the monk, and the target is immobilized until the end of the monk's next turn.	
Minor Actions	
⸸ **Feint** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target grants combat advantage to the monk until the start of the monk's next turn.	
Skills Acrobatics +12	
Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+5)	
Con 12 (+4) **Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 12 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant	

Tactics

Shynlar Draal (Agent of the Eye): Imbued with some of the Xanathar's aberrant essence, Shynlar can corrupt minds with a touch and open a third eye in the middle of his forehead that fires deadly rays. He helps the characters as well as he can until his fellow agents arrive (see "Concluding the Adventure").

Hovark Krinshale (Half-Orc Monk): Hovark helps the characters defeat Lanador but switches sides if the battle turns against them, hoping that Lanador might reward his betrayal and admit the half-orc into his inner circle. It's a dangerous gambit, but Hovark will do whatever it takes to destroy Lanador—even pretend to be his ally.

4. Warehouse

Combat Encounter Level 9 (2,300 XP)

Lanador makes his stand in a two-story stone warehouse overlooking the underground river. If no alarm has been sounded, he's taking inventory of a recent delivery of provisions smuggled out of Skullport, killing time until his drow buyer arrives to pick up the elf slaves. If he's been warned of intruders, Lanador is hiding behind the crates.

The flameskull Eldreth Zanderraum, the leader of the Unyielding Sword, is also present. Eldreth wants to meet Lanador's drow contact and forge a business relationship with the dark elves. In the interest of maintaining his own relationship with the flameskull, Lanador has reluctantly agreed to facilitate the meeting.

Light: Bright light (oil lanterns).

Monsters: Lanador, Eldreth Zanderraum (flameskull), 3 minotaur soldiers, 4 gray company recruits, 2 human thugs. The recruits keep watch on the second-floor catwalks (area 4A) while the thugs patrol the docks (area 4C). Everyone else is on the main floor of the warehouse (area 4B).

When the characters enter area 4A or 4B, read:
This dilapidated stone warehouse contains stacks of wooden crates and barrels, and it reeks of fish and brine. Old wooden catwalks cling to the walls and stretch below the rafters 15 feet overhead. Oil lamps hanging below the catwalks cast the warehouse in a warm yet vaguely unpleasant light, and rats scuttle about in dark shadows.

Area 4C can be described as follows:
Built around the old warehouse is a stone dock lined with cracked posts affixed with rusted mooring rings and brackets holding torches. There are no boats present.

Lanador doesn't like intruders or anyone interfering in his business. Subterranean life has made him

Lanador

paranoid; he's afraid the Shadow Thieves might learn his whereabouts and send assassins to eliminate him. He doesn't know that one of his latest acquisitions is an Agent of the Eye, and of course the last thing he needs is a beholder crime lord breathing down his neck. Unfortunately for him, Lanador is more accustomed to burning bridges than mending them. He curses his bad luck, places the blame squarely on Eldreth and the Unyielding Sword, and does his best to swiftly dispose of the characters.

If the characters gain surprise, Lanador and his forces are in the open. If they're expecting trouble, they hide behind crates and cling to the shadows on the catwalks, hoping to lure intruders deep inside the warehouse so they can attack from all directions. Characters can detect the ambush with a moderate Perception check.

When the characters confront Lanador, read:
Lanador is a physically powerful specimen clad in black dragonhide armor. A coiled whip hangs from his hip, and he twirls his mighty halberd with the strength and skill of a weapon master.

"I don't care who you are or who sent you. Nobody threatens my operation, kills my men, steals my property, and lives."

Place Lanador, Eldreth, and the minotaurs where you see fit. The flameskull tends to stay close to Lanador or the archers, all of whom are members of the Unyielding Sword. The minotaurs work for Lanador and answer to him alone.

4A. Wooden Catwalks. These 15-foot-high catwalks are strung with cobwebs and have rickety wooden railings. A 5-foot section of catwalk has AC/Fortitude 10, Reflex 5, and 20 hit points.

Ladders: Two sturdy wooden ladders lean against the catwalks, one near the northeast corner and the other to the south. They can be pulled free as a minor action.

Stacked Crates: A few of the crates on the warehouse floor are stacked 10 feet high, and moving from the top of one of these elevated crates to a catwalk (or vice versa) requires a moderate Acrobatics check or Athletics check; on a failed check, the jumper must succeed on a saving throw or fall to the floor.

4B. Warehouse Floor. Mold-encrusted stone tiles cover the floor of this old smugglers' den, which contains barrels of drinking water and cheap ale, and stacks of crates containing rations, oil, soap, and other necessities that are hard to come by in the Underdark. Lanador relies on these supplies to keep his minotaurs and his men happy.

Barrels: The barrels are held in place with clay bricks. If the bricks are pushes aside, the barrels can be rolled as part of a move action. The barrels are blocking terrain and provide cover. A barrel has AC/Fortitude 10, Reflex 5, and 30 hit points.

Crates: These large crates measure 5 feet on a side, and they are blocking terrain.

Treasure: Lanador keeps some treasure hidden in a crate marked "Straw." Nestled deep in the straw-packed crate is a locked chest containing 500 gp in mixed coinage, an engraved ivory drinking horn worth 250 gp, and a level 10 common or uncommon magic item.

4C. Stone Docks. These mold-encrusted docks overlook a swift underground river that varies in depth from 5 to 30 feet. Stone posts set at regular intervals are mounted with iron mooring rings and iron brackets that hold *everburning torches*.

Lanador receives shipments of supplies from a boat that navigates the underground river a couple of times a month. He's also awaiting the arrival of a boat carrying drow interested in buying elf slaves from him (see "Concluding the Adventure").

Eldreth Zanderraum, flameskull

Lanador **Level 9 Elite Brute (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 800

HP 232; **Bloodied** 116 **Initiative** +6
AC 21, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20 **Perception** +5
Speed 6
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

☼ **Heartless Leader ✦ Aura** 5
When an ally in the aura drops to 0 hit points, it does not fall unconscious or die until the end of its next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Halberd** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 9 damage, and Lanador can slide the target 1 square.

⊕ **Whip** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d6 + 6 damage, the target falls prone, and Lanador can pull the target 1 square.

Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: Lanador uses *halberd* twice or *whip* twice.

Triggered Actions

Strike the Fallen (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to Lanador starts its turn prone.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Lanador uses *halberd* or *whip* against the triggering enemy, but Lanador cannot slide or pull the target with this attack.

Skills Athletics +14, Intimidate +12
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+5)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+7)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment hide armor, halberd, whip

Flameskull **Level 8 Artillery**
Tiny natural animate (undead) XP 350

HP 70; **Bloodied** 35 **Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21 **Perception** +11
Speed 0, fly 10 (hover)
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 fire, 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Traits

Regeneration
The flameskull regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. Whenever the flameskull takes radiant damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Illumination
The flameskull sheds bright light out to 5 squares, but it can reduce its brightness to dim light out to 2 squares as a free action.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Fiery Bite** (fire) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 0 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 1 fire damage.

Flame Ray (fire) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +13 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 6 fire damage.

Fireball (fire) **✦ Encounter**
Attack: Area burst 3 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +13 vs. Reflex. The flameskull can exclude two allies from the area.
Hit: 3d8 + 8 fire damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Minor Actions

Mage Hand ✦ At-Will
Effect: The flameskull conjures a spectral, floating hand in an unoccupied square within range 5. The hand lasts until the end of its next turn or until it uses this power again. While the hand persists, the flameskull can take the following actions.
Minor Action: The hand picks up or manipulates an object weighing 20 pounds or less. It can hold only one object at a time.
Move Action: The hand moves up to 5 squares in any direction, carrying the object it holds.
Free Action: The hand drops the object it is holding.
Sustain Minor: The hand persists until the end of the flameskull's next turn.

Skills Stealth +12
Str 5 (+1) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 22 (+10) **Cha** 20 (+9)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic

2 Minotaur Soldiers **Level 8 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 350 each

HP 89; **Bloodied** 44 **Initiative** +8
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19 **Perception** +11
Speed 8

Standard Actions

⊕ **Battleaxe** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 8 damage, and the minotaur uses *shield bash* against the same target.

Minor Actions

Shield Bash ✦ At-Will (1/round)
Requirement: The minotaur must be using a shield.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 damage, and the target falls prone.

Triggered Actions

Goring Toss ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the minotaur shifts.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 1 (triggering enemy); +11 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, the target is immobilized until the end of its turn, and the minotaur slides the target up to 2 squares to a square adjacent to the minotaur.

Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 13 (+5)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment heavy shield, battleaxe

4 Gray Company Recruits **Level 7 Minion Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Traits

Grim Solidarity
If the recruit starts its turn adjacent to a creature that has *grim solidarity*, the recruit can make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 6 damage.

➶ **Shortbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 6 damage.

Triggered Actions

⊕ ➶ **Inspired Fervor** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Trigger: The recruit scores a critical hit against an enemy.
Effect (Free Action): The recruit makes a basic attack against the enemy, with a +2 power bonus to the attack roll.

Str 15 (+5)	**Dex** 18 (+7)	**Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 16 (+6)	**Int** 10 (+3)	**Cha** 16 (+6)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment studded leather, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows

2 Human Thugs **Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +5
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Traits

Rush into Battle
Whenever the thug hits a creature with a charge attack, the target grants combat advantage until the end of the thug's next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Club** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage.

Str 14 (+5)	**Dex** 11 (+3)	**Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 13 (+4)	**Int** 10 (+3)	**Cha** 13 (+4)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment club

Tactics

Lanador: Lanador's aura is large enough to encompass most of the warehouse and makes his allies (particularly the minions) hold up better in a fight. He prefers to attack with his halberd but can reach enemies on the catwalks with his whip and pull them down to the floor. He can also climb onto the crates to reach the catwalks, if necessary.

Eldreth: The flameskull flies out of range of melee attacks and targets enemies with *flame ray*, relying on its regeneration to repair any damage it has taken. It saves *fireball* until after it is bloodied, and it tries not to catch any allies in the blast.

Minotaur Soldiers: They charge into combat and fight to the death to defend Lanador.

Gray Company Recruits: The recruits cling to the catwalks and try to stay within Lanador's aura while shooting at enemies with their bows.

Human Thugs: These dim-witted clods are watching for boat traffic. They have orders to notify Lanador when the drow arrive and are reluctant to leave their posts, even if they hear sounds of combat in the warehouse. They crack open the warehouse doors, and if Lanador looks like he's in trouble, they join the fray. Otherwise, they stay on the docks and ready actions to attack any enemy they see.

Mission Accomplished?

To receive their reward from the City Watch, the characters must bring Lanador to justice, either by hauling him to Waterdeep to answer for his crimes or by presenting evidence of his demise (such as his head). The reward for the missing elves is paid upon their safe return.

Once Lanador and his allies are dealt with, the characters must decide what to do next. The characters might learn that Lanador is awaiting the arrival of a drow interested in buying elf slaves; with that information, the heroes might decide to hole up in Lanador's lair until the drow arrive and eliminate them as well. If so, proceed with event 5 before wrapping up with event 6.

If they do not choose to stay and fight the drow, the characters have one final encounter when they leave Lanador's lair. The Xanathar sends a handful of his agents to escort Shynlar Draal safely back to Skullport in event 6.

Event 5: Drow Gold

Combat Encounter Level 7 (1,580 XP)

A drow named Tezzarq arrives 4d12 hours after the party's confrontation with Lanador. He comes by boat with the intention of buying elf slaves for the matron of his house—a gift for her birthday. Tezzarq is understandably upset if he discovers that he has come all this way for nothing.

The event begins as Tezzarq's boat arrives at the docks. How the encounter unfolds depends on where the characters position themselves and what preparations they make, so be ready to improvise as needed.

Light: *Everburning torches* cast the docks in bright light.

Monsters: Tezzarq (drow spellspinner), 2 troglodyte thrashers, 10 troglodyte grunts (rowers). All of the monsters begin the encounter in a 4-square-by-8-square boat. The drow stands in the middle of the boat, and the two thrashers stand fore and aft. The grunts line the boat's sides (five per side) and carry oars made of giant fish bones.

When you're ready to begin the encounter, read:
Emerging from the darkness is a large wooden boat, its prow carved to resemble a spider. Troglodytes with oars made from giant fish bones guide the boat toward the stone docks west of the old warehouse. Between them is a drow wearing wizard's robes, standing next to a large chest.

Tezzarq is expecting some sort of greeting party and is suspicious if no one is waiting on the docks for him. If the characters pose as guards, Tezzarq assumes all is well, and he is easily surprised. The drow has met Lanador before, so any attempt by a character to pose as Lanador probably won't end well.

If the ship is allowed to moor, Tezzarq and his thrashers step out onto the docks while the grunts remain aboard the vessel. If there are no signs of Lanador or his men, Tezzarq decides it's worth his time to explore the nearby warehouse. He keeps the two thrashers close by.

Treasure: Tezzarq's payment to Lanador is locked in the chest on the boat, and Tezzarq carries the key, the head of which is shaped like the insignia of House Masq'il'yr. (A hard History check reveals only the drow house's name and that the house is small and obscure. If you already have a villainous drow house in your campaign, you can use that one instead.) The chest contains 5,000 gp and is not trapped. It can be smashed open with a hard Strength check or picked with a hard Thievery check.

Drow Spellspinner **Level 8 Artillery**
Medium fey humanoid XP 350

HP 64; **Bloodied** 32 **Initiative** +6
AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21 **Perception** +5
Speed 6 Darkvision

Standard Actions

Spellshock Rod (implement, lightning) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 7 lightning damage, and the drow pushes the target up to 2 squares.

Dark Bolt (implement, lightning, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +13 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 2 lightning damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Lightning Web (implement, lightning) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +11 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is immobilized and takes ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends both).
Miss: The target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 lightning damage (save ends both).

Move Actions

Levitate ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The drow flies up to 4 squares vertically and hovers there until the end of its next turn. When the levitation ends, the drow descends safely to the ground, without taking falling damage.
Sustain Move: The levitation persists until the end of the drow's next turn, and it can fly up to 3 squares vertically and 1 square horizontally.

Skills Arcana +12, Dungeoneering +10, Stealth +11

Str 10 (+4)	**Dex** 15 (+6)	**Wis** 13 (+5)
Con 10 (+4)	**Int** 17 (+7)	**Cha** 16 (+7)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment robes, rod implement

2 Troglodyte Thrashers **Level 7 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (reptile) XP 300 each

HP 100; **Bloodied** 50 **Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 19 **Perception** +6
Speed 5 Darkvision

Traits

Troglodyte Stench ✦ **Aura** 1
Living enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls while in the aura.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 4d6 + 5 damage.

Tooth and Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one or two creatures); +12 vs. AC. If the troglodyte targets only one creature, it can make this attack twice against that creature.
Hit: 2d6 + 2 damage. If this attack bloodies the target, the troglodyte uses *claw* against that target.

Str 18 (+7)	**Dex** 15 (+5)	**Wis** 16 (+6)
Con 20 (+8)	**Int** 4 (+0)	**Cha** 11 (+3)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Draconic

10 Troglodyte Grunts	Level 6 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 63 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +6
AC 20, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16	**Perception** +5
Speed 5	Darkvision
Traits	
☼ **Troglodyte Stench** ✦ **Aura** 1	
Living enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls while in the aura.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Club** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 damage.	
Effect: The troglodyte shifts up to 2 squares.	
Standard Actions	
Scatter ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The troglodyte is targeted by a close attack or an area attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The troglodyte shifts up to 2 squares to a square outside the triggering attack's area of effect.	
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)	
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 9 (+2)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Draconic	
Equipment club	

Tactics

Tezzarq: Tezzarq uses and sustains *levitate* to stay out of reach of melee attackers while targeting foes with *dark bolt* and *lightning web*.

Troglodyte Thrashers: These brutes are straightforward melee combatants that rely on *troglodyte stench* for defense.

Troglodyte Grunts: When targeted by close attacks and area attacks, these minions use *scatter* to avoid getting caught in the area of effect. They remain on the boat unless summoned by Tezzarq to fight. In combat, they drop their fish-bone oars in favor of attacking with bone clubs.

Event 6: Agents of the Eye

Roleplaying Encounter or Combat Encounter
Level 9 (2,400 XP)

The characters aren't the only ones sent to Lanador's lair by the Xanathar. The beholder crime lord expects them to rescue Shynlar Draal, but it does not want its agent to remain in the party's custody for long. As the characters prepare to leave Lanador's lair, two more Agents of the Eye arrive, accompanied by more of the Xanathar's beholderkin and a hired gang of trolls.

This encounter most likely takes place just outside the slavers' compound, south of area 1, as the characters prepare to retrace their steps back to Skullport.

Light: Bright light.

Monsters: 2 Agents of the Eye, 2 spectator beholderkin, 4 trolls.

Other Creatures: Shynlar Draal (Agent of the Eye), other rescued slaves, any beholderkin accompanying the party, and any Cave Troll mercenaries still loitering about after event 4. None of these creatures are factored into the XP award for this encounter.

When the characters leave Lanador's lair, read:

Up ahead, you see several figures approaching: a male dwarf and a female dark elf surrounded by a posse of four hulking trolls. The two smaller figures have a pair of tiny beholderkin floating behind them.

The drow raises a hand in greeting. "Well met. I am Lytana." She gestures toward the dwarf. "This is Zarul. We've been sent by the Eye to escort Shynlar Draal safely back to Skullport. As you have no further business there and need to get back to Waterdeep to collect your reward, I trust you have no objections."

Shynlar Draal gladly goes with Lytana and Zarul back to Skullport, but the agents do not permit the characters to tag along. They urge the characters to return to the surface, and any spectators still with the characters lead them back to Waterdeep by an alternate route. If all the party's beholderkin were destroyed, Lytana and Zarul give the characters their beholderkin to serve as escorts and guides back to the surface.

If the characters refuse to part company with Shynlar or insist on joining the Xanathar's agents for their trip back to Skullport, the agents and the trolls attack. Shynlar and any beholderkin still with the party turn on the characters at that moment.

If Shynlar isn't with the characters, Lytana and Zarul demand to know where he can be found. If they believe the characters are transporting Shynlar's corpse but refuse to relinquish it, the agents attack. Their orders are to bring Shynlar back to Skullport dead or alive. The Xanathar doesn't want the characters or anyone else using Speak with Dead and other rituals on Shynlar's remains.

2 Agents of the Eye	Level 7 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300 each
HP 58; **Bloodied** 29	**Initiative** +5
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21	**Perception** +9
Speed 7	Darkvision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Aberrant Touch** (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 8 psychic damage.	
⊛ **Eye Ray** (varies) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: The agent uses a random *eye ray* power determined by rolling a d6. Using an *eye ray* does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
1-2. *Fire Ray* (fire): Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 fire damage.	
3-4. *Sleep Ray* (charm): Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target instead falls unconscious (save ends).	
5-6. *Disintegrate Ray*: Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Skills Insight +9, Stealth +10, Streetwise +11	
Str 11 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+4)	
Con 10 (+3) **Int** 14 (+5) **Cha** 17 (+6)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	

2 Beholderkin, Spectator	Level 9 Minion Artillery
Tiny aberrant magical beast	XP 100 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +7
AC 23, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21	**Perception** +9
Speed 0, fly 8 (hover)	All-around vision, darkvision
Traits	
All-Around Vision	
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the spectator.	
Standard Actions	
Eye Ray (varies) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 8 damage of a random type, determined by rolling a d4: 1—cold, 2—fire, 3—necrotic, 4—radiant.	
Str 1 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)	
Con 11 (+4) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 7 (+2)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Deep Speech	

4 Trolls	Level 9 Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 400 each
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60	**Initiative** +8
AC 21, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18	**Perception** +6
Speed 8	
Traits	
Regeneration	
The troll regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the troll takes fire or acid damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.	
Troll Healing (healing)	
Whenever an attack that doesn't deal acid or fire damage reduces the troll to 0 hit points, the troll does not die and instead falls unconscious until the start of its next turn, when it returns to life with 15 hit points. If an attack hits the troll and deals any acid or fire damage while the troll is unconscious, it does not return to life in this way.	
Standard Actions	
Claw ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 7 damage. If the attack bloodies the target, the troll uses *claw* against it again.	
Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+6)	
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 5 (+1) **Cha** 9 (+3)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant	

Tactics

Agents of the Eye: Lytana, Zarul, and Shynlar (if he is present) stand behind the trolls and make *eye ray* attacks. They order coup de grace attacks against enemies who were rendered unconscious by their sleep rays.

Beholderkin: The spectators fly out of melee range and make *eye ray* attacks. Beholderkin that were formerly allied with the party turn against the characters, proving their true loyalty to the Xanathar.

Trolls: The trolls tear enemies to pieces with their claws, fighting until slain.

Concluding the Adventure

The Xanathar's beholderkin (assuming any of them survived) can lead the party safely to Waterdeep. Once the characters reach the city sewers, the beholderkin abandon the party and return to the Underdark. If the characters manage to prevent one of more of the beholderkin from escaping, the tiny creatures starve themselves and die within 2d4 days unless, for some reason, you want them to remain with the party. (The Xanathar probably won't object as long as it can continue using the beholderkin as scrying devices.)

The characters have no trouble collecting their rewards for rescuing the slaves and delivering proof of Lanador's defeat. The Xanathar makes good on its promised reward as well, knowing that good agents are hard to find. The beholder crime lord might have another job for the heroes at some future date. . . .

About the Author

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Ecology of the Malaugrym

By Brian Cortijo

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Malaugryms are hideous, sinister creatures, bent on the domination, devastation, and consumption of all sentient life around them. Even as grotesque and unfeeling as they are, perhaps the most unsettling aspect of these shapechanging beasts is that they have a human heritage.

Origin of the Race

From their base of operations deep in the Shadowfell, the malaugryms have made several incursions into Faerûn over the centuries. During those events, they have been heard to invoke the name "Malaug," referring to that individual as the leader and progenitor of their race.

Individuals who claim to know more than that assert that Malaug (or Maulaugadorn, as he is sometimes called) was indeed the name of a brilliant wizard—the first human to cross from the natural world of Toril into the Plane of Shadow. As a consequence of that transit, he gained unprecedented mastery over shadow magic—but at the same time was transformed into an inhuman abomination. Once a normal man of great strength and sharp intellect, this new creature was twisted and strange, capable of shifting his form to match that of nearly any creature he encountered.

While exploring and honing his new abilities in the depths of the Shadowfell, Malaug crafted a fortress that malaugryms call the Castle of Shadows and consider to be their ancestral home. In time, Malaug began to walk the planes, discovering a wide range of other creatures that he could learn to impersonate. The offspring he sired during this period were the original malaugryms, each one having the same true form and inheriting his shapechanging ability. Ever since, these three-eyed, tentacled beings have pursued a campaign of asserting their supremacy over all other beings.

Forays into Toril

According to one documented tale, Malaug returned to Toril on at least one occasion, in the third century of the Dalereckoning calendar. He took the form of a wizard called Undarl Dragonrider and subverted the rule of the kingdom of Athalantar. Finally confronted and seemingly slain by the rightful heir and young Chosen of Mystra, Elminster Aumar, "Undarl" reverted to a shifting mass of flesh and tentacles before he was whisked away by contingency magic. Whether he survived the incident is unknown, because none of his progeny have seen or heard from him since.

Provoked by their forebear's apparent demise, malaugryms have organized several times to strike into Toril and get vengeance on their hated enemies—not only those who had a hand in Malaug's

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disappearance, but humankind in general. The most notable attempts are summarized below.

An assault on Blackstaff Tower in 1179 DR was turned back by the combined efforts of a group of mages led by Elminster and Khelben Arunsun.

In 1182 DR, the malaugryms and the newly formed Harpers engaged in a conflict known as the Harpstars Wars. The fighting spanned several planes and lasted until 1222 DR, when Khelben took over the body of their leader and persuaded the malaugryms to return to their home realm.

In 1357 DR, malaugryms (along with other power groups and secret cabals) attempted to seize the secrets of spellfire from young Shandril Shessair but were thwarted—again—by Elminster and his companions.

Malaugryms descended on Faerûn in profusion in 1358 DR at the outset of the Time of Troubles. Before they could bring their plans to fruition, most of them were dispersed and defeated.

At least one malaugrym was killed while trying to impersonate a Masked Lord of Waterdeep, and constant rumors fly that one or another Lord of Waterdeep is always in danger of being replaced—or, indeed, is a malaugrym already.

In the present day, accounts suggest that a malaugrym calling itself Seriadne has infiltrated the Simbarch Council of Aglarond, which might represent the greatest influence one of their number has possessed since the days of Undarl Dragonrider.

Physiology and Behavior

In its natural form, a malaugrym is a swollen, fleshy sphere between 3 and 4 feet in diameter. Three long, fully prehensile tentacles are evenly spaced around the sphere, each tipped with a hooked claw. Three eyes surround a large beak that has toothlike protrusions running along it. To anyone else who views multiple malaugryms in their true form, the creatures appear identical. To other malaugryms, however, subtle differences in flesh color, eye placement, and beak structure provide a unique profile as clearly identifiable to a malaugrym as a human face is to another human.

Malaugryms are capable of near-perfect imitation of a living creature's form. They often use this ability in an innocuous way, to duplicate humanoids they have encountered so that they can better blend into society, but in a dangerous situation a malaugrym can transform into nearly any shape imaginable, even combining aspects of multiple creatures or incorporating elements of its own natural form. A malaugrym that is transformed, if it loses concentration due to a heightened state of emotion, can sometimes be identified by the subtle golden glow in its eyes (detectable with a hard Perception check).

Their magical nature and ability to shift form gives malaugryms an uncanny ability to heal most physical wounds. This regeneration is not effective against silver weapons. Malaugryms are not harmed by the touch of silver, but they nevertheless avoid its use in certain tools (such as eating utensils) that might be used as weaponry. Malaugryms are immune to poisons of all types.

In their natural form, malaugryms move about by a means of flight similar to the levitation of beholders. If one is somehow forced to move without the use of flight, a malaugrym can ambulate—slowly and clumsily—by dragging itself along with its tentacles. Although they are capable of flight even in humanoid form, malaugryms prefer to walk when they have legs, sometimes to keep up appearances and sometimes just to enjoy the sensation of true limbs.

Effects of Aging

Malaugryms do not visibly age, and they retain their vigor as they grow older. A form of degeneration occurs in the mind of a malaugrym over time, though. An aging malaugrym begins to forget events of its earlier life, and it becomes unable to recall individuals, plots, or locations. When a malaugrym starts to unknowingly leave evidence of its nature or its intrigues, or to forget where its caches of stored magic and wealth are hidden, other members of the race recognize that it is time to dispatch their ailing relative.

Malaugryms view the mental degeneration of their species to be a flaw that must be concealed from other races at all costs—not merely to protect themselves, but to preserve their pride. Once a malaugrym has endangered the race or revealed its intentions to the world at large, its fellows move in to destroy the offending specimen with savage efficiency. As such, no malaugrym has ever been known to die of advanced age or other natural causes.

Creature Comforts

As a feature of their racial memory, malaugryms are acutely aware that they will one day forget everything that was important to them. This awareness leads to apprehension and fear of what awaits them, which malaugryms compensate for by indulging in every kind of physical and mental decadence. Each malaugrym has specific preferences for amusement, dress, and other pleasures of existence, and it does what it can to indulge these desires at every turn. Malaugryms also share a love of intrigue and manipulation, and they carefully cultivate circles of influence around them to make easier the acquisition of those pleasures they most desire.

Food

Because of their unique physiology, malaugryms can consume nearly any kind of organic matter. Despite that fact, they are incredibly particular about their food, preferring the rarest, most expensive, or most dangerous-to-acquire foodstuffs. This discernment

especially applies to their clear favorite among meals: intelligent humanoids. Each malaugrym has a preference for how to corner and kill its prey (poison, seduction, combat, and so on), but all share a love of extending a hooked tentacle into a victim, adding a vicious maw to the end of the appendage, and consuming the meal from the inside out.

Questing for Magic

Malaugryms constantly seek magic items of two kinds: those that can transport the user to another plane, and those that can delay or prevent the slow loss of memory and mind inherent to their species. They seek plane-spanning magic for its utility in transporting them to the Shadowfell, but also for the much rarer magic that might show them a path to the Far Realm. Malaugryms have come to believe that the "strange beings" Malaug mated with to create their race came from that place outside reality, but none have yet discovered what their "mother" (or "mothers") might have been, nor has any reliable means of passage to that realm been found.

Guises

No two malaugryms are identical, either in their true form or in terms of the other bodies they prefer to "create" for themselves. Although the race is genderless, a malaugrym usually identifies with a preferred gender (male or female) and assumes identities that match its preference. Additionally, malaugryms develop attachments to particular elements of society that manifest in similarities between the personages they adopt. For instance, a malaugrym that pretends in one generation to be a noble with a love of the sea might in its next incarnation choose to be that noble's child, or a powerful merchant in command of ships that traverse the Inner Sea.

The malaugryms' enjoyment of their pursuits is intense, but nothing compared to the fury with which malaugryms confront those beings that disrupt their subterfuge. A displaced malaugrym, divorced from its comforts, protections, and favored food supply, is a dangerous and relentless foe.

Habitat

Malaugryms have two natural habitats: the Shadowfell and Toril (the mortal world).

The Shadowfell

Malaugryms are justly proud of their ancestor, the first human mage to explore the secrets of the Plane of Shadow. Ironically, however, since the unraveling of the Weave during the Time of Troubles and the subsuming of the Plane of Shadow into the Shadowfell, the old pathways that malaugryms employed to gain access to the world have vanished or changed, making passage for them between Toril and the Shadowfell more difficult than before.

Although rare malaugryms might have the power to transport themselves between planes through rituals or other acts of wizardry, such ability only comes with experience. Most aging malaugryms remain in the Castle of Shadows, conserving their energy in an effort to keep hold of their memories and their sanity. Some malaugryms worm their way into the societies of other planar travelers or manipulate spellcasters into doing their bidding to transport themselves to and from their home.

All these difficulties prevent malaugryms nowadays from infiltrating Toril in great numbers.

Toril

Although the race did not originate in the natural world, malaugryms can operate on Toril as tough they were born here—no doubt due to the fact of their progenitor's heritage. They suffer no ill effects from extended exposure to the differing magic or environments on the mortal plane. Spells and rituals that banish extraplanar creatures to their home planes have no effect on malaugryms. In other words, once a malaugrym arrives on Toril, it generally doesn't leave until and unless it wants to.

On Toril, malaugryms seek out population centers that provide easy access to food, influence, and entertainment. Because they are loath to perform any real work and can blend in virtually anywhere, malaugryms can find lairs of comfort and ease in any city of Faerûn.

Population numbers for malaugryms on Toril are understandably difficult to come by. As of 1372 DR, five malaugryms were known to be at large in Faerûn. During the last century, estimates of their numbers have ranged from half a dozen to more than thirty. Most sages who have studied the matter agree that roughly twenty individual malaugryms are active in the world today.

Society

Malaugryms as a group are best understood as a large, sprawling noble family. Although infighting and even kinslaying occur within the group, malaugryms are most concerned with the survival of the race. The head of the family, the Shadowmaster, sometimes directs individual malaugryms to work toward goals necessary for their inevitable conquest of Toril, but otherwise a malaugrym is free to pursue its own desires and amusements, and even to work (sometimes feverishly) against the equally selfish plots of its fellow malaugryms.

Naming

Malaugryms have few traditions regarding naming. One custom that has continued down the generations is the use of a common syllable or part of a name to commemorate an important (but likely forgotten) ancestor. The use of the element "-luth" in names

such as Arathluth, Luthbyr, Luthvaerynn, Taluth, and Zarasluth—all of whom were active in Toril around a century ago—suggests a powerful or influential common ancestor for certain members of the race.

Religion

Malaugryms are not particularly devout beings, but they do honor the gods, in particular Bane and Shar. Malaugryms revere Bane for his strong hand and his facility with rulership, and they see him as a fine example of what a malaugrym lord, given the proper opportunity, might do with the chance to rule over mortals. They hold a similar respect for the risen devil Asmodeus, but avoid his worship because of the obligatory infernal pacts that would bind them in ways they find unpleasant.

Some malaugryms venerate Shar in her aspect as the goddess of loss. They know that their works will eventually fall to ruin, and even their memories will fail them, so these malaugryms seek Shar's protection from such loss, in the hope that proper worship of the goddess of night and shadows might liberate them from their race's greatest weakness. Although there are no known malaugrym priests of Shar, such a foe—its schemes reinforced by divine will—would be terrible indeed.

Despite their desire for influence and power, malaugryms avoid impersonating powerful religious figures for extended periods, fearing the retribution of the gods or the advent of a religious crusade attempting to wipe out their race.

Internal Relations

Malaugryms rarely communicate with one another as they go about their separate missions. Individuals spend their time plotting, scheming, or influencing the shorter-lived humanoids among which they live—in short, playing with their food. They have little patience for the intrigues of others of their race, and they cooperate only when commanded to do so by their leader, the Shadowmaster.

Overt conflicts between malaugryms are rare, and when they occur, they are expressed as long-running rivalries in which the malaugryms use their agents to foil one another's plans. Revealing that malaugryms are at work (or even the fact of their existence) is taboo in such battles, and direct attacks intended to injure or kill either of the malaugrym rivals are unconscionable—unless a malaugrym appears to be losing its wits or reveals the existence of its race.

The Shadowmaster

The nominal leader of all malaugryms is known as the Shadowmaster. Since the disappearance of Malaug, the Shadowmaster has filled the role of head of the family and its chief schemer, capable of ordering individual malaugryms to work together, to abandon a home or an identity (or adopt a new one), or to kill another malaugrym.

Like the head of any noble family, the Shadowmaster holds its position by tradition and influence, not by any mystical decree. That position is challenged every few decades by a younger malaugrym who believes itself more capable than the current holder. Although any malaugrym can call itself a shadowmaster, one possesses the authority of the title only if it can slay the previous leader.

The Shadowmaster of the malaugryms has no relation to the Shadowmasters of Telflamm, the thieves' guild of that city. Confusing matters further, some folk refer to all malaugryms as shadowmasters, a confusion the shapechangers are happy to encourage.

Relations with Other Races

Malaugryms do not get along well with members of other races. They can blend into any society, even mimicking specific members of families or organizations, but they have a dislike for all members of other species. They hold special disdain for the humanoid races, and outright hatred for the puffed-up humans of Netheril, whose ruler falsely claims to have been the first mage to cross into the Plane of Shadow.

Malaugryms also have a distrust for longer-lived races that operate in the shadows, such as dragons, beholders, and undead, all of whom have long-reaching plans that might conflict with their own. Although they are prideful, malaugryms are objective enough to know when they are outmatched, and they are willing to leave the field if competition with these powerful creatures might otherwise become an issue.

Malaugryms do not abide the presence of doppelgangers, viewing them as rivals and trophy kills. When a malaugrym finds a doppelganger in its territory, it finds a way to subvert the weaker shapechanger and then kills it, leaving the body in a public location to cover up its own machinations.

Power and Influence

Malaugryms are small in number and are reluctant to work together. Despite these drawbacks, they remain a potent, influential power group in Faerûn, winding their way into the halls of power of many cities and nations.

Owing to their ability to shift form and to observe targets for years without being detected before they replace a person of power, malaugryms have little trouble establishing themselves in positions of influence. Only their impatience, infighting, and eventual mental decay have prevented malaugryms from conquering half of the Heartlands by now.

Malaugryms among Mortals

A number of malaugryms lurk within humanoid society today, waiting for their chance to engage a new intrigue or to consume their next target. Game statistics for two of them, Arathluth and Luthvaerynn, appear in the *Forgotten Realms® Campaign Guide*.

Arathluth

Adopting aliases such as Gahnek, Imbar, Napid, and Ulstult, Arathluth travels regularly up and down the Sword Coast, posing as a merchant or a mercenary. In human form, Arathluth has an off-putting habit of staring intently into a listener's eyes. Arathluth delights in the moment of betrayal, when it can shift form and watch the look of horror on the faces of its victims as they realize, too late, that their original apprehension about it was correct.

Arathluth's favored nonhumanoid form is that of a great leonine beast with thick, powerful tentacles growing from its back.

Custom Malaugryms

Thanks to the versatile nature of malaugryms, there are almost no restrictions to the sorts of abilities you can give one. Most malaugryms are elite monsters of the paragon or the epic tier. Give the monster immunity to poison, regeneration 10 (15 if it's level 21 or higher) except against silver, the *change shape* ability, and whatever attacks you think best match its form.

Use the Monster Builder to create a custom malaugrym to menace your group!

Luthvaerynn

The sole malaugrym in Telflamm, the city where the human Shadowmasters rule, Luthvaerynn is interested in consolidating its influence in the city through trade and black market enterprises, profiting from both legitimate merchants and illegal businesses under its many guises. Nearly all of its identities are female, although their age and appearance varies widely.

Luthvaerynn is far more comfortable in humanoid form than in its native monstrous shape. When threatened, it prefers to preserve its masquerade for as long as possible, using its magic and hiding behind lackeys. Once its minions have been dispatched, it is willing to unleash its tentacles on anyone who might threaten its plans.

Amarune, "Lady Irlingstar"

This relatively young malaugrym began its charade in Waterdeep, when it slew and replaced a noble by the name of Lady Nael Irlingstar. In the last century, it has staged the noble's kidnapping and disappearance, orchestrated the death of several of "Nael's" husband's kinsfolk, allowed itself to be captured by the War Wizards of Cormyr, and was imprisoned in—and later escaped from—the castle bearing the Irlingstar name.

Since its escape, Amarune has operated in the Heartlands, and it moves frequently between Sembia and Cormyr. Through guile, seduction, and murder, it has amassed great wealth and influence.

Amarune is capable of minor magic, but lacks the necessary discipline to truly study wizardry. Because it has seen no major threats to its existence for nearly a century, Amarune has grown complacent, and it might find itself in danger of exposure in the near future due to its continued use of a single identity.

In its humanoid form, Amarune appears as a beautiful noble just entering middle age, matching the general ethnic makeup of the victim it is preparing to seduce or consume. When threatened, it extends tentacles from its arm and its back, and its mouth expands into a vicious beak.

Amarune, "Lady Irlingstar" — **Level 11 Elite Controller**
Medium aberrant magical beast (shapechanger) — XP 1,200

HP 171; **Bloodied** 85 — **Initiative** +8
AC 25, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23 — **Perception** +6
Speed 2 (clumsy) or 6 as a humanoid; fly 6 (hover) — Low-light vision
Immune poison
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Regeneration
Amarune regains 10 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When it takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

Vicious Beak ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 8 damage.

Flailing Lash ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 2 (one or two creatures); +16 vs. AC. If Amarune targets only one creature, it can make this attack against that creature twice.
Hit: 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target falls prone.

Hail of Missiles (force) **✦ Encounter**
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +14 vs. Reflex;
Hit: 4d10 + 4 force damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) **✦ At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: Amarune alters its physical form to appear as a Medium malaugrym or as a member of any Medium humanoid race (including an individual it has seen) until it uses this power again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 32 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

Skills Arcana +15, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14

Str 20 (+10)	**Dex** 16 (+8)	**Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 18 (+9)	**Int** 20 (+10)	**Cha** 18 (+9)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common

Adventure Hooks

Malaugryms are scattered across Faerûn, and their tentacles reach into ruling houses, noble families, merchant companies, and power groups. Here are some hooks you can use to introduce a member of this fell race into your campaign.

Family Ties: A distant relation to one of the adventurers appears, hoping to aid his more adventuresome relative in pursuit of fortune and glory. In truth, a malaugrym seeks to dispose of the character and take his or her place in the party, eventually killing off the others in the group and returning to civilization to enjoy the influence the party has earned over the course of its adventures.

Mistaken Identity: Tales reach the adventurers of a village being slowly killed off by a shapechanging humanoid that is vulnerable to silver. Although stories suggest that the creature is a werewolf, it is in fact a young malaugrym, improving its abilities by preying on a group of easy targets.

Old Friends: A long-standing contact of the adventurers (a sponsoring merchant, for example) begins to subtly change his attitude about one of his former allies, now a rival. The former ally is actually a malaugrym and is subverting the contact's plans. To add to the intrigue, the contact could have been a malaugrym the whole time.

About the Author

Brian Cortijo is a freelance game designer who plays about in the Forgotten Realms too often. His recent credits include January's coverage of the kingdom of Cormyr and "Tavern Profile: The Old Skull Inn" in *Dungeon* 201.

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